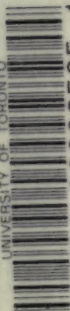


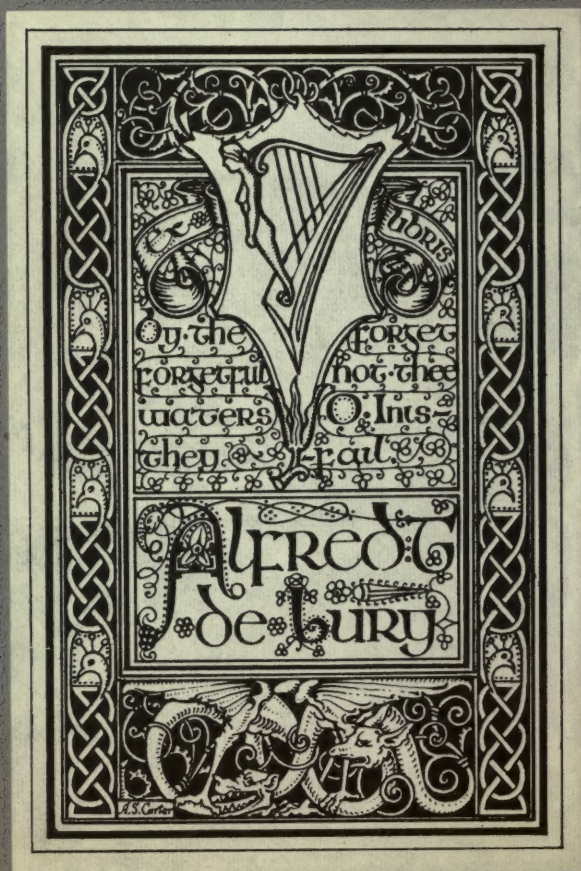
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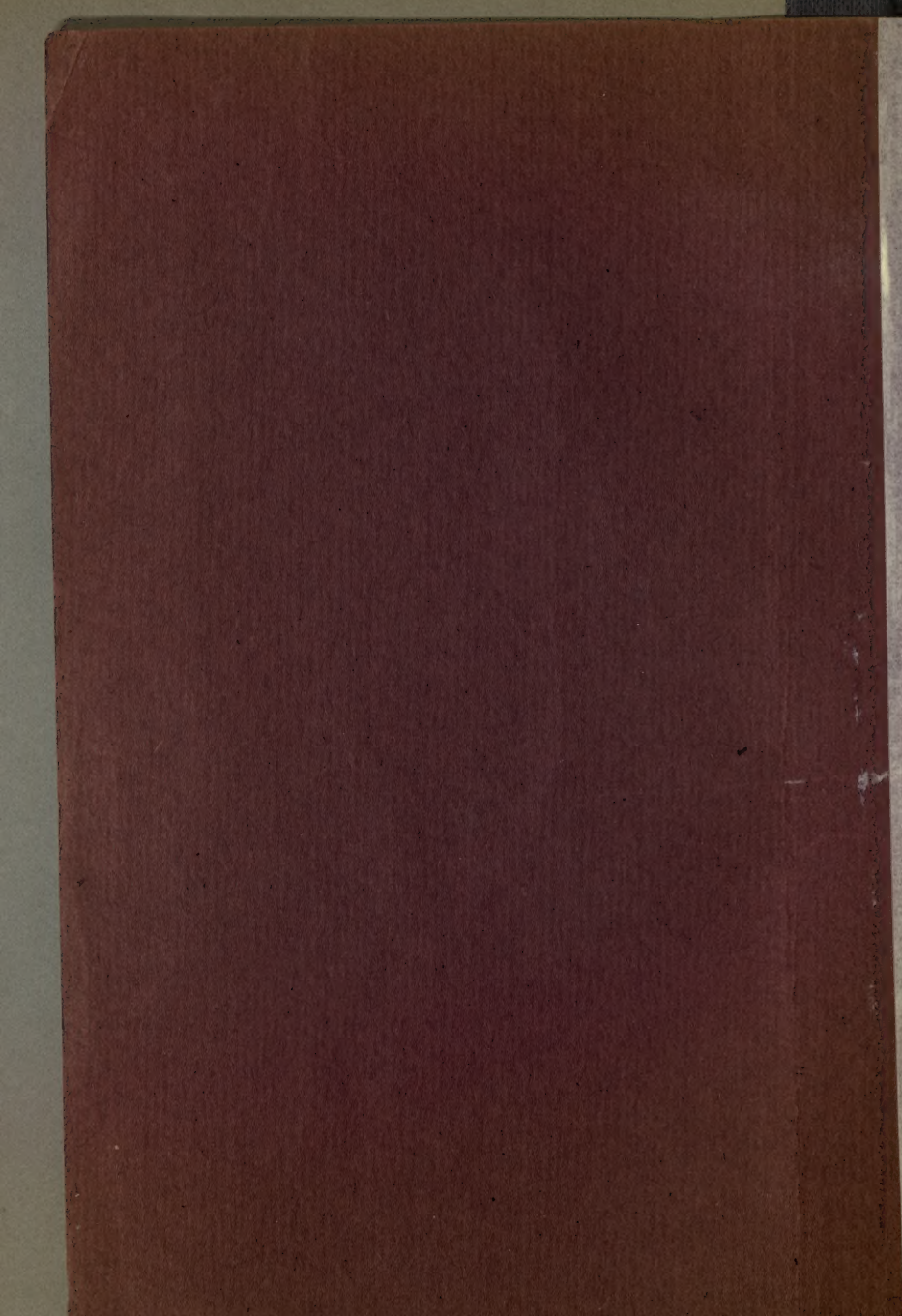
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WINDSOR :

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# Songs of a Navy.

PATRICK MCGILL

Author of "Gleanings from a Navy's Song Book"

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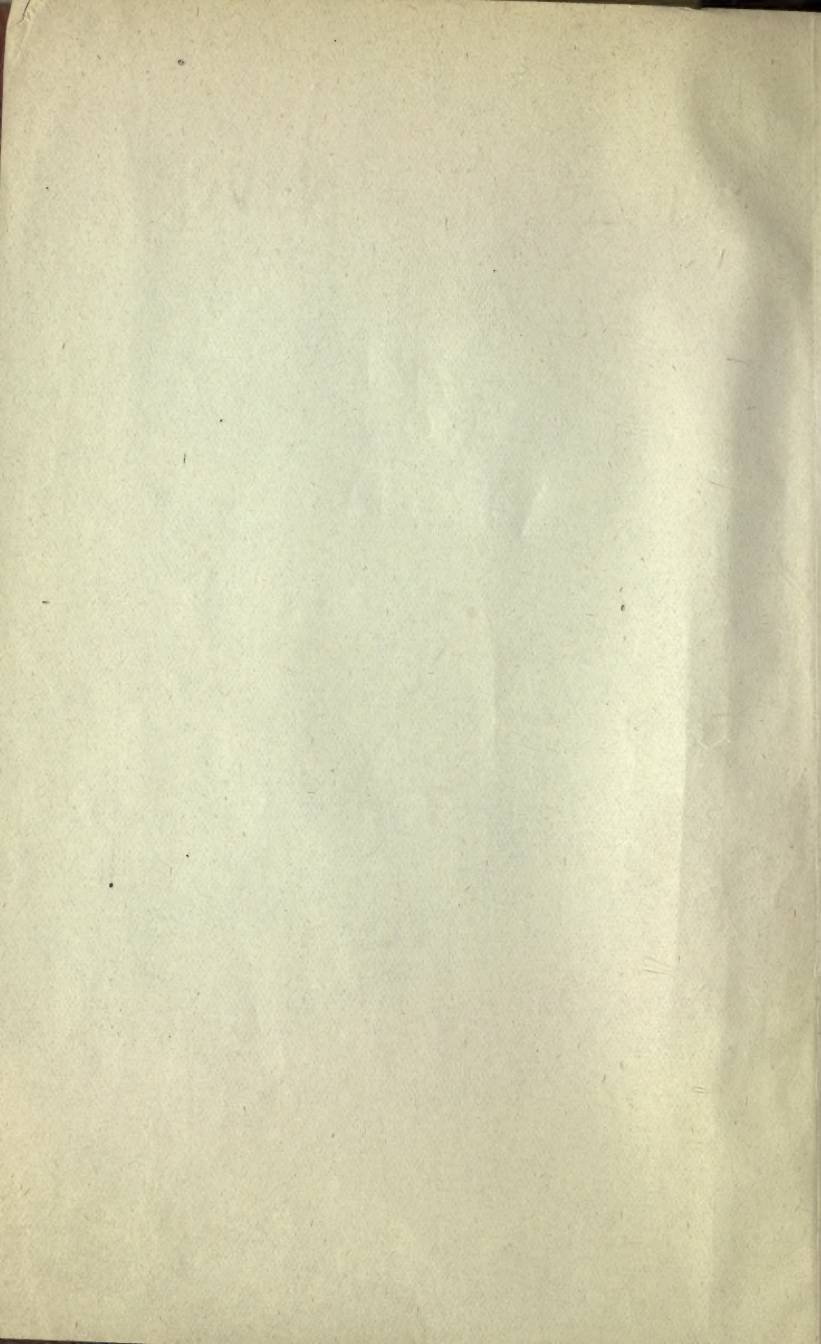
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# Songs of a Navvy.

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BY

PATRICK MACGILL

(Author of "Gleanings from a Navvy's Scrap Book").

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(Author of "Fifteen Years in a Navy's Scrap Book")

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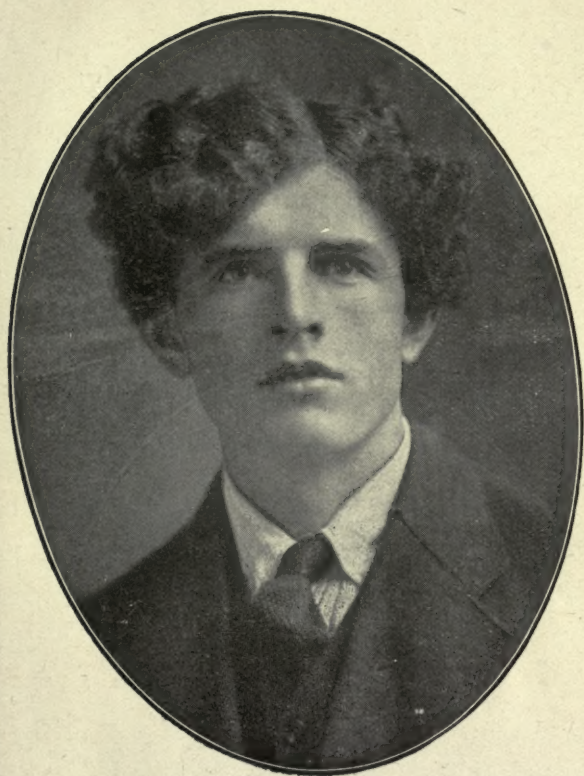
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These Verses are Dedicated  
to my Pick and Shovel.

Because we have swined in the drift,  
Because we have horsed it alone,  
Strong, unafraid, or in shine or in shade,  
Companionless and unknown.

Because we have laboured our bit  
For all our impetuous worth,  
Roughing it hard, discarded and scarred,  
In the uttermost corners of earth.

Through the drag of the long, stagnant day,  
Where the infinite wilderness is,  
As we slunk from the breath of an imminent death  
In this tortuous world of His.

Since we have been pals of the wild,  
Tried in the furnace and true,  
Don't take it amiss if I dedicate this  
Volume of verses to you.

PATRICK MacGILL.

On the Open Road, October, 1911.

*I do not sing*

*Of angel fair or damozel  
That leans athwart a painted sky,  
My little verses only tell  
How human beings live and die,  
And labour as their years go by.*

*I do not sing*

*Of plaster saints or jealous gods,  
But of the little ones I know,  
Who paint their cheeks or bear their hods  
Because they live in doing so  
Their hapless life on earth below.*

*I sing of them*

*Whose lives are varied as their creeds—  
I've shared their every toil and care,  
I know their many hopes and needs,  
I've seen Death take them unaware;  
Mayhap some day their death I'll share.*

*I sing their life,*

*Misknown, miscalled, misunderstood,  
Its ups and downs, its outs and ins,  
I know the evil and the good,  
Where virtue ends and vice begins—  
But judge no mortal by his sins.*

*I sing of them,*

*The underworld, the great oppressed,  
Befooled of parson, priest, and king,  
Who mutely plod earth's pregnant breast,  
Who weary of their sorrowing,  
—The Great Unwashed—of them I sing.*

*I sing my songs,*

*In mirthful guise or woeful strain,  
I've dwelt where woe and hunger dwell,  
And told my rosaries of pain—  
I sing my songs to you—and well,  
You'll maybe like them—who can tell?*

# Songs of a Navvy.

---

## Foreword.

These be the little verses, rough and uncultured, which  
I've written in hut and model, deep in the dirty ditch,  
On the upturned hod by the palace made for the idle rich.

Out on the happy highway, or lines where the engines go,  
Which fact you may hardly credit, still for your doubts 'tis so.  
For I am the person who wrote them, and surely to God,  
I know !

Wrote them beside the hot-plate, or under the chilling skies,  
Some of them true as death is, some of them merely lies,  
Some of them very foolish, some of them otherwise.

Little sorrows and hopings, little and rugged rhymes,  
Some of them maybe distasteful to the moral men of our  
times,  
Some of them marked against me in the Book of the Many  
Crimes.

These, the songs of a navvy, bearing the taint of the brute,  
Unasked,\* uncouth, unworthy, out to the world I put,  
Stamped with the brand of labour, the heel of a navvy's  
boot.

---

\* These verses were not published at the earnest request  
of several friends.



## A Navy's Philosophy.

Across life's varied ways we drift  
 Unto the tomb that yawns in wait,  
 One ruling o'er the mighty state,  
 One sweating on the double shift.

I've whirled adown the sinful slope  
 That leads to chasms of despair,  
 And dwelt in haunts of hunger where  
 The spectre sorrow jeers at hope.

My ways are cast with many men  
 Who fight with destiny and fail,  
 The down and outers of the jail.  
 The tavern and the gambling den—

The men who bet and drink and curse,  
 Who tread the labyrinthine maze  
 Of sin, who move on rugged ways,  
 Who might be better—ay, and worse!

My dead-end comrades true as steel,  
 The men who bravely bear the goad,  
 The wild uncultured of the road—  
 Like them I speak just as I feel.

'Neath silver skies with silence shod,  
 Engirdled by the Milky Way,  
 And set with stars of brightest ray,  
 As fits the far-off paths of God,

I've slept with them ; in lonely lands,  
 Ere came the city vomit thence  
 To take the house and claim the fence  
 Built with the toil of calloused hands,

I've wrought with them ; where gin shops smell,  
 And stagnant models smut the town,  
 I've shared their complaints when out and down—  
 My brothers, don't I know them well !

I've begged with them from door to door,  
 And thought unutterable things  
 Of lands where courtiers and where kings  
 Still grind the faces of the poor.

The cold grub eaten in the dawn,  
 The wet shag smouldering as you smoke,  
 For ever being down and broke,  
 You learn to like it—later on.

You learn to like it—for you must,  
 Though hardly worth the pains you take,  
 Or yet the sacrifice you make—  
 The barter for the vital crust.

Of things abstruse I cannot sing  
 In fitting strains, so let me say.  
 From hand to mouth, from day to day  
 Is not the right and proper thing.

\* \* \* \* \*

But let me sing in gayer strain,  
 The glory of the wilder life,  
 Apart a little from the strife,  
 The feline fury and the pain.

Despite the hate insensate which  
 The fates have borne to crush me low,  
 I love to watch the puppet show  
 And count myself exceeding rich.

You say I own no lordly halls,  
 No parks extending far and wide,  
 No cornice, column, cusp of pride.  
 No paintings hanging from my walls.

No hall of pride with fresco decked—?  
 My mountain pillars rear on high.  
 My floor the earth, my roof the sky,  
 And God Himself the Architect.

No paintings from a master's hand—?  
 My canvas spreads from flower to star  
 Barbaric, grand, anear, afar,  
 From sea to sea, from land to land.

No deep cathedral music swells  
 For me, you say, I own it true,  
 But under Heaven's gentian blue,  
 What strains of sweetness fill the dell!

The rustle of the wind-swept trees,  
 The robin's song at early morn,  
 The larks above the crimson corn,  
 What music in the world like these!

All, all are mine. The simple flower,  
 The ocean in its madding wrath,  
 The drunken wind that beats my path,  
 The arched skies that shine or lower.

I've sailed on ships with sails of fire,  
 By amber ports, through carmine seas,  
 And opal-tinted argosies,  
 To dreamt-of islands of desire.

For me the music of the streams,  
 The tints of gold on heath and furze.  
 Where wind-blown gorse clumps shake their  
       spurs,  
 For me the wonder-world of dreams.

While you are selling at the mart,  
 Or buying souls to glut your greed.  
 (Who fatten on your brother's need,)  
 In lonely ways I dwell apart:

Or when the jewelled carcanet  
 Of Heaven decks the darkling sky,  
 Beside the cabin fire I lie  
 And smoke my soothing cigarette.

And dip in some enchanted page,  
 Or linger o'er a story told  
 By some grey chronicler of old,  
 The dreamer of a long-past age.

And as the smoke wreaths rise, meseems  
 I live in Ind or Babylon,  
 And share the hopes of poets gone,  
 The dreamers of æsthetic dreams.

Or sing of Rome, or bleed for Troy,  
 Or dwell in Tyre or Nineveh——  
 But ah! 'tis fancy's boundless play,  
 The wayward dreamings of a boy.

\* \* \* \* \*

'Tis sweet to write it down in verse,  
 Or think of it, but all the same,  
 If e'er you try you'll find the game  
 Is hardly worth a tinker's curse.



The open road is passing grand  
 When skimming on a motor car,  
 But dossing 'neath the pallid star  
 Is something you don't understand.

In fact you'll hardly realize  
 While lounging in your drawing room,  
 How drear December's dirge of doom  
 Across the snow-clad level flies.

Or how the frosty crowbar sears  
 The hand that lifts it from the drift—  
 You'll learn it on the ten-hour shift  
 Where I was learning all these years.

You'll likewise learn the useful rule,  
 The motto of the navy man,  
 To do as little as you can  
 And keep your pipe and stomach full.

\* \* \* \* \*

The song I sing is very rude,  
 In sin mayhap my life I live,  
 But ye are wise and will forgive  
 As none of us are very good.

We sin—we'll sorrow later on!  
 We laugh—some day we're sure to weep!  
 We live—by night we'll fall asleep,  
 And none may waken us at dawn!

And we are brothers one and all,  
 Some day we'll know through Heaven's grace,  
 And then the drudge will find a place  
 Beside the master of the hall.



## The Song of the Tramps.

The eager hands will never take us back,  
 The luring eyes will never draw us home,  
 With the changing heaven o'er us, and the white road  
     stretched before us,  
 Sure the world is ours to revel in and roam—  
 We have padded it, alone, afar, apart,  
 We have roughed it to the ultimate extremes,  
 Where the blazing dawn-tints kindle, or the sun-kissed rivers  
     dwindle  
 In a land of fairy fantasies and dreams.

Would we linger in the city and the stench,  
 The alleys and the fetid walls amid,  
 In the dirt beyond all telling of the festered, filthy dwelling  
 And the gutter degradation—God forbid!  
 We are not the fools you reckon us to be,  
 Our woebegone appearances are shammed.  
 Tho' we act the discontented, on the byways unfrequented,  
 We aren't so incorrigibly damned.

We doss it 'neath the timid shaky stars,  
 Where the mountains shrink and cower overawed,  
 In the gaunt mysterious places, with the dew upon our faces,  
 While the breathless night goes by in silence shod,  
 As the pallid, leprous, moon above us frets,  
 By the fitful fire-flames flickering undersized,  
 We think as men unshriven, of an evil unforgiven,  
 Of the many hopes we never realized.

Oh! the dreaming and the fancy and the hope,  
 The wonder and the worry of it all.  
 The gipsy blood that's flowing through our veins will keep  
     us going  
 On the road while thrushes sing or sparrows fall;  
 By meadows waving lazily and slow,  
 By streamlets singing songs of wild desires.  
 And the eyes of heaven peeping, will keep watch above us  
     sleeping,  
 And the dawn will see the ashes of our fires.

To the wealth of mother nature we are heirs,  
 The skies of opal, amber, sapphire hue,  
 The moorland and the meadows, the sunshine and the  
     shadows,  
 We love them—for we've nothing else to do!  
 The eager hands will never lure us back,  
 The plaintive eyes can never draw us home,  
 With the heaven bending o'er us  
 And the white road stretched before us,  
 Sure the world is ours to revel in and roam.

### My Love.

My love is fair as the days are,  
 That grace the month of June,  
 But woe is me, for her ways are  
 The ways of the silver moon—  
 Cold when the spell of June is  
 Over the land and sky,  
 Warm when the haughty moon is  
 Changing its glance on high.

And oh! how I hope and hover,  
 Hope for her constant smile,  
 Hover an artless lover,  
 Fool of her artful guile—  
 For she is as fair as the days are,  
 That grace the month of June,  
 But woe is me! for her ways are  
 The ways of the fickle moon!

### My Dream Girl.

Like a flower in the mist of the moorland, spectral, shadowy,  
 Is she the girl of my dreamings, simple and fawn-like shy;  
 Hers the ethereal radiance of heavenly groves and streams;  
 Such as the painter pictures, such as the poet dreams.

Out in the open spaces she beckons my spirit on,  
 She that is born of evening, and fades in the lilac dawn.  
 She comes from the ports of the flaxen moon on one of the  
 spirit ships,  
 Her tresses are night's abysses, the red rose gleams on her  
 lips.  
 Through the soft, impalpable ether she has ordered her ship  
 to go,  
 By Peristan of the musk-winds, where snow-white spice  
 flowers blow;  
 On the manes of the crooning breezes, by fairy lands untold,  
 She comes in the guise of a mortal, who never groweth old;  
 Through the tangle of gossamer silver the bow of her vessel  
 cleaves,  
 And the moonlight opens before it with a rustle of willow  
 leaves.  
 Down to the fringe of the moorland where the land and the  
 heavens meet,  
 Where the quivering bloom of the heather presses to kiss her  
 feet,  
 Prankt in a robe of star-mist tinged with its many dyes,  
 And I watch as a lover watches till the transient vision flies—  
 The mystic girl of my dreamings, simple and fawn-like shy,  
 The flower in the mist of the moorland, lonesome and shadowy.

## Logic.

"Palnam qui meruit ferat"—he who wins the palm should  
 bear it, for I certainly admit,  
 Being but the super-navvy, burdened with the hod, vous-savez,  
 I've no wish to carry it.  
 I don't pose as one who knows an awful lot about Spinoza, or  
 some other ancient seer,  
 I don't wear a sort of faintly dawning, growing, super-saintly  
 imitation of a sneer,  
 But withal I've a prolific knowledge of the scientific which I've  
 picked up here and there,  
 And a little super-added from the lore of those who pad it on  
 the road to anywhere.

In my knockabout existence, on the line of least resistance, I  
 have plodded day by day,  
 And of course from the beginning I have done a lot of sinning  
 in a very vulgar way,  
 And you'll find I'm no exception in aesthetical perception of  
 the art that lies in lies,  
 So each item of my tale is to be read, cum grano salis, as it  
 will, since ye are wise.

Here a man lays money by him. My life's rule is "carpe  
 diem," and at last a day will be  
 When they'll gladly write, "Hic Jacet," on a marble slab and  
 place it over him, but as for me,  
 Everyone can do without me, no one cares a damn about me,  
 no one's sorry when I slide—  
 But it is a trifle funny, when he's dead, the man of money,  
 someone's hellish satisfied.

I am one of those who know it, it takes more to make a poet  
 than a mass of flowing hair,  
 I have tried the thing already, so my friend, "Experto crede,"  
 listen to me and beware.  
 Homer was a parish beggar, Burns had to measure lager, or  
 some other beverage,  
 Poor old Villon had to take a jemmy in his hand to make an  
 ill-begotten living wage—  
 What's the good of writing of the stars and skies that are  
 above the world you rhyme upon so well—  
 Rhyme in sentimental gushes of your Angelina's blushes—if  
 your verses do not sell?



I have read Montaigne and Dante in the dead end or the  
 shanty, which you'll certainly agree  
 May be due in greatest measure to the economic pressure and  
 the hurried times that be—  
 "Otium cum dignitate," for some problem rather weighty,  
 certainly I've never had,  
 For you'll find it hard to learn, all the views of Kant or Sterne,  
 hashing on the barrow squad—  
 But apart from that the fact is, if you put it into practice, put  
 your knowledge into rhyme,  
 Do it up as this is done up, spin it up as this is spun up, you  
 are scoring every time.

\* \* \* \* \*

There are lots of folks who clamour that the man who strikes  
 the hammer, cannot, though he likes to, rise  
 From the squalor of the masses to the glory of Parnassus,  
 which I might remark is lies—  
 'Tis a pretty wide expansion from the muckpile to the mansion,  
 some, and many still may rave,  
 Yet they know (at least they ought to) that tho' far removed  
 it's not too far from either to the grave.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have taken off the oddest little moment for a modest glance  
 at Tolstoy or at Taine,  
 While the boss was kicking hell up I've been trying to develop  
 the resources of my brain,  
 Or when burst as burst at nap I meditated quite unhappy on  
 the lore of ancient fools,  
 On some grim platonic sages who had never lost their wages  
 in the fishy gambling schools,  
 On the white road leading through the land of "No one wants  
 you," to the land of "What you should have done."  
 I have plodded day and daily, sometimes woeful, sometimes  
 gaily, brother of the wind and sun,

For companions I have taken—Shakespeare, Old Khayam, or  
 Bacon, I have sat beneath the bough,  
 But no loaf and flask was near me, so old Bacon couldn't cheer  
 me—Shakespeare had forgotten how—  
 Though a lack of education makes one lack appreciation of the  
 greatest minds of earth,  
 Still you'll find that ne'er a rub is harder borne than lack of  
 grub is, while you estimate their worth.

\* \* \* \* \*

If a man says, "Gee up, Neddy." in uncultured words and ready, suffer him and let him pass,  
"Proceed Edward" is so toffish that it seems a little offish,  
when you say it to an ass—  
So I hope my wisdom scraps will be esteemed—but they perhaps will be regarded just as lies,  
And remember that my tale is to be read, "cum grano salis,"  
as it will, for you are wise.



## Waiting.

He raised the latch iv his father's door,  
 An' went, the dark look on his face—  
 I wait an' wait him ivermore,  
 On him I wait for ivermore,  
 As not a wan can fill his place.

The kine go east at dawn iv day,  
 In the cold gray dawn I tell my beads,  
 But out in the wurl' an' miles away,  
 An' miles an' miles so far away  
 My Fergus lives an' niver heeds.

The kine come back to me at eve,  
 But still he never comes anigh;  
 Through all the night I pray an' grieve,  
 Through all the long, black night I grieve,  
 An' pray to God, an' cry an' cry.

An' "Mary pity me," I pray,  
 I pray to God, "Thy will be done,"  
 But more to her my prayers I say,  
 To Mary, Mother, more I say,  
 For long ago she lost her Son.

I look in the fire an' think an' sing,  
 An' sing the songs he liked to hear,  
 An often to my mind I bring  
 His form an' face, so well I bring,  
 I think that he is very near.

I weep thro' all the lonely night,  
 An' pray an' pray upon my knees,  
 That maybe with the morrow's light  
 He'll come back, with the morrow's light—  
 For Mary, Mother, hears an' sees.

## Boreas.

He threw the pine tree in the fiord,  
 And down the spumous seas he hurled  
 The jagged iceberg of the north  
 To languish in a stagnant world,  
 And o'er the highway of the skies  
 The clouds impetuously whirled.

Upon the bald, blank hill we met,  
 He blustered in insensate wrath,  
 He caught and flung me like a child,  
 He shook and bent me like a lath,  
 Because I dared to flaunt his power,  
 Because I ventured on his path.

"Zephyrus, Eurus, Africus,  
 Boreas, Auster, Aquilo,  
 Or one or all, I know not which,  
 And care not though I do not know,  
 Why use your means to work me harm?  
 And bash and birl and bend me so?

"The flashing lightnings pierce you through,  
 You bluster vainly at the hill,  
 Ten thousand times you beat his crest,  
 Ten million, and he flaunts you still;  
 You are the fettered slave of man,  
 You bow obedient to his will."

"You—you—unblushingly you rave  
 Of all the pigmy deeds of men—  
 I've swept across the clay that was  
 Or Paladin or Saracen,  
 When naked Adam blushed for shame  
 I gloried in my starkness then!

"I saw the might of Babylon,  
 I saw the verdant fields of Thrace,  
 I marked the Romans in their power,  
 I've seen them in their dire disgrace—  
 I am; they were, and Cæsar now  
 Can't wipe the maggot off his face.

"Where is glory that was Greece?  
 Let Athens' crumbling walls reply—  
 Where is the pride of Nineveh,  
 Thou shivering fool of destiny?  
 Between the earth and sky I've borne  
 The ashes that were Pompei!



"What is the pride you rave of worth?  
 What are the things that you have done?  
 Are all your deeds of deathless fame  
 From David to Napoleon,  
 A musty coffin full of dust,  
 A grimly grinning skeleton?

"I bear the scent of briar and rose  
 Through all the lover-longed-for June,  
 I hurl the death-black clouds athwart  
 The silvern oceans of the moon,  
 I am Siroc and Harmattan,  
 Solano, Mistral, and Simoon.

"Upon the proud Armada I  
 Came vengeful and in dreadful shape,  
 I drove its ships through goaded seas  
 Where slimy-walled the fissures gape  
 In many a gloomy, deadly bluff,  
 In many a chasmed, tusk-edged cape.

"The ringed and sworded buccaneers,  
 They blessed me in the siren breeze,  
 I lured the Vikings wild and rude  
 Across the icy northern seas,  
 And then I laughed their faith to scorn,  
 And swept their laden argosies.

"Beyond the reaches of the stars,  
 Impearled byways of the night,  
 In dark abyssmal zarahs, far  
 I've ventured on my endless flight,  
 Beyond the thrones of gods unknown,  
 And margents of the infinite."

He came I wist not whence nor where,  
 The bluster ready on his lip,  
 He fled, and left me wondering,  
 Impotent, helpless, from his grip—  
 Despite it all, I felt with him  
 A sort of roving fellowship.

---

## Going Home.

I'm going back to Glenties when the harvest fields are brown,  
And the Autumn sunset lingers on my little Irish town,  
When the gossamer is shining where the moorland blossoms  
blow

I'll take the road across the hills I tramped so long ago—  
'Tis far I am beyond the seas, but yearning voices call,  
"Will you not come back to Glenties, and your wave-washed  
Donegal?"

I've seen the hopes of childhood stifled by the hand of time,  
I've seen the smile of innocence become the frown of crime,  
I've seen the wrong rise high and strong, I've seen the fair  
betrayed,  
Until the faltering heart fell low the brave became afraid—  
But still the cry comes out to me, the homely voices call,  
From the Glen among the highlands of my ancient Donegal.

Sure, I think I see them often, when the night is on the town,  
The Braes of old Strasala, and the homes of Carrigdown—  
There's a light in Jimmy Lynch's house, a shadow on the  
blind,

I often watched the shadow, for 'twas Mary in behind.  
And often in the darkness, 'tis myself that sees it all,  
For I cannot help but dreaming of the folk in Donegal.

So I'll hie me back to Glenties when the harvest comes again,  
And the kine are in the pasture and the berries in the lane,  
Then they'll give me such a welcome that my heart will leap  
with joy,

When a father and a mother welcome back their wayward boy.  
So I'm going back to Glenties when the autumn showers fall,  
And the harvest home is cheery in my dear old Donegal.

## On the Late Shift.

*Mayhap there's a hitch in the signal wire,  
Or the other points are drawn,  
But some go out on the night shift lone  
That never come in with the dawn,  
And a crimson splash on the engine wheel  
Just tells of the shunter gone.*

"Seven waggons to siding four, one to the buffer end—  
Damn you! watch or they'll run you down. God, it's a  
hellish night!  
Jimmy Collins is getting a wife—time he was making a bend—  
There he's there at the dead-end points, signalling with the  
light.

"A good man out on the night-shift, Jim, willing—and ain't it  
queer,  
There he's singing, the first time I've heard him in my life—  
Yes, willing and straight is Jimmy, I've mated him seven  
year—  
Damn it, its blowing somewhat — and now he looks for a  
wife.

"See and look to your carcass, and watch. On a night like  
this  
You never can tell the minute -- where has that Collins  
gone?—  
An engine punches your ticket—God, if your feet would miss—  
Damn me! I think I'm nervous—signal the engine on.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Two o'clock! I was certain 'twas almost break of day—  
Where is Collins? Oh, yonder. I'm wet to the very spine—  
A train for the cross-road siding—pull it the other way—  
Collins, you fool! what ails you? Jump to the other line!

"Collins, you idiot, jump it! . . . Christ, he's down like  
a sack! . . .  
Surely he must have heard me-- . . . Speak to me.  
Jimmy, do.  
. . . Tell me you aren't hurt — ah! the blood on the  
track—  
. . . I shifted the engine, Jimmy, but heavens! I thought  
you knew."

"Break it to her in the morning—I was thinking about her,  
then—

The wind was blowing awful—sudden the engine came. . .  
. . . Whistle the box for the signal. . . Married to her  
at ten.

. . . Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name."

---

*Mayhap there's a hitch in the signal wire,  
Or the other points are drawn,  
But a red stain gleams on the deadly flange,  
And a night-shift man is gone—  
And the bride to be has changed her robe  
For a mourning dress at dawn.*

---

### **An Irish Mother's Lament.**

The rushes are weepin' ; the black pool is sleepin'  
As gloomy as death is,  
The lone lake is sighin' ; the night breeze is cryin'  
As soft as a breath is—  
'Tis only the waters an' braes of Glenmorra  
That know of my sorra.

Asthor, sure it may be  
(If all that they say, be  
As true as the tellin'),  
That you still are there in  
The rath of Dunkerrin  
With fairy folk dwellin',  
An' never will think of my heart bruk with  
sorra,  
Alone in Glenmorra.

My beads I keep sayin', my knees wore with prayin  
Thro' mornin' an' even—  
If prayin' could make a soul come back 'twould take an'  
Archangel from heaven.  
But she's gone with the fairies, an' here in my sorra  
I weep in Glenmorra.



## Played Out.

As a bullock falls in the crooked ruts, he fell when the day was  
o'er,  
The hunger gripping his stunted guts, his body shaken and  
sore.  
They pulled it out of the ditch in the dark, as a brute is pulled  
from its lair,  
The corpse of the navvy, stiff and stark, with the clay on its  
face and hair.

In Christian lands, with calloused hands, he laboured for  
others' good,  
In workshop and mill, ditchway and drill, earnest, eager and  
rude ;  
Unhappy and gaunt with worry and want, a fool to the whims  
of fate,  
Hashing it out and booted about at the will of the goodly and  
great.

To him was applied the scorpion lash, for him the gibe and the  
goad—  
The roughest fool of our moral wash, the rugged wretch of the  
road.  
Willing to crawl for a pittance small to the swine of the tinsel  
sty,  
Beggared and burst from the very first, he chooses the ditch to  
die—  
. . . Go, pick the dead from the sloughy bed, and hide him  
from mortal eye.

He tramped through the colourless winter land, or swined in  
the scorching heat,  
The dry skin hacked on his sapless hands or blistering on his  
feet ;  
He wallowed in mire unseen, unknown, where your houses of  
pleasure rise,  
And hapless, hungry, and chilled to the bone he builded the  
edifice.

In cheerless model and filthy pub, his sinful hours were passed,  
Or footsore, weary, he begged his grub, in the sough of the  
hail-whipped blast,  
So some might riot in wealth and ease, with food and wine be  
crammed,  
He wrought like a mule in muck to the knees, dirty, dissolute,  
damned.

Arrogant, adipose, you sit in the homes he builded high,  
 Dirty the ditch, in the depths of it he chooses a spot to die,  
 Foaming with nicotine-tainted lips, holding his aching breast,  
 Dropping down like a cow that slips, smitten with rinderpest;  
 Drivelling yet of the work and wet, swearing as sinners swear,  
 Raving the rule of the gambling school, mixing it up with a  
 prayer.

He lived like a brute, as the navvies live, and went as the  
 cattle go,  
 No one to sorrow and no one to shrive, for heaven ordained  
 it so—  
 He handed his check to the shadow in black, and went to  
 the misty lands,  
 Never a mortal to close his eyes or a woman to cross his hands.

---

*As a bullock falls in the rugged ruts  
 He fell when the day was o'er.  
 Hunger gripping his weakened guts,  
 But never to hunger more—  
 They pulled it out of the ditch in the dark.  
 The chilling frost on its hair,  
 The mole-skinned navvy stiff and stark  
 From no particular where.*



### Choses Du Soir.

(From the French of Hugo.)

Chilly the eve, and the silent mist  
Veils the moon in a mystic haze,  
The cattle go down by the waterways,  
And the skyline glimmers like amethyst.

A silhouette on the lonely dune  
The traveller shows twist earth and sky,  
And fretfully cawing the rooks go by,  
Shrinking in fright from the leprous moon.

The witch sits down, a ghoul at her throat,  
And over the tarn the goblin call,  
The spider has spun its web on the wall,  
And waits for its prey and wearies not.

*This of old was thy song Ivon—  
The song is living the singer gone.*

Apart the storm-chased luggers fly,  
The straining mainmast is stripped and bare,  
And the billows sing to the whirling air  
A dirge for a failing dynasty.

The coach goes rumbling along the road,  
The road that leads to the wide world's end,  
Carrying, mother or wife or friend—  
Pity the ones who to-night are abroad.

On the hillside lone the graveyard is,  
A cross, a flower, a written stone,  
The worm that crawls on the skeleton,  
And the mouldering lips that we loved to kiss.

The fire is bright on the cottage hearth,  
The kettle sings in an undertone  
A song of joy that is all its own,  
And children are full of idle mirth.

*This of old was thy song Ivon—  
Where is the wayward singer gone?*

### To a Dead Child.

(From the German of Uhland.)

You came in silence and you went—  
But whence or whither who'll explain?  
We only know the God who sent  
You hither called you back again.

---

### A Last Wish.

(From the German of Sturm.)

When my heart has ceased for ever beating out the dirge of  
time,  
Lay me by some quiet river, 'neath the ivy spray and thyme,  
Place no fading fragrant roses, o'er the dew-besprinkled moss,  
For the weary sleeper chooses but the evergreen and cross.

---

### The End.

Gaunt clouds are piled athwart the sky,  
The cold wind sighs along the earth,  
In hapless towns the people die,  
The fires are cold on every hearth,  
The spectral moon has lost its light,  
The shrunken sun is pale and wan,  
And time is one unholy night—  
A night that never knows a dawn.

Forsaken homes where mortals dwelt  
Are drear as death and still as Styx.  
The cloisters where the godly knelt  
Are fallen on the crucifix;  
No watcher ponders on the stars,  
Of life and death no sages tell,  
No soldier hastens to the wars,  
No preacher speaks of heaven or hell.

The fiery meteors cross the skies,  
And far apart the Twins have gone,  
*A planet to the sacrifice!*  
And Paris sleeps with Babylon.  
A mighty race has passed away,  
A fretful planet whirled in space—  
A pawn in time's unending play,  
Is mourning for the mighty race.



## The Song of the Shovel.

Down on creation's muckpile where the sinful swelter and  
 sweat,  
 Where the scum of the earth foregather, rough and untutored  
 yet,  
 Where they swear in the six-foot spaces, or toil in the barrow  
 squad,  
 The men of unshaven faces, the ranks of the very bad ;  
 Where the brute is more than the human, the muscle more  
 than the mind,  
 Where their gods are the loud-voiced gaffers, rugged, uncouth,  
 unkind ;  
 Where the rough of the road are roosting, where the failed  
 and the fallen be,  
 There have we met in the ditchway, there have I plighted with  
 thee.  
 The wage slave troth of our union, and found thee true to my  
 trust,  
 Stoic in loveless labour, companion when beggared and burst,  
 Wonderfud navvy shovel, last of tools and the first.

Your grace is the grace of a woman, you're strong as the oak  
 is strong ;  
 Wonderful unto the navvy, the navvy who sings your song—  
 Forever patient, and ready to do what your master bids,  
 Though you laboured at Beni Hassan, and wrought at the  
 Pyramids,  
 Uprearing the Grecian temple, the gold Byzantium dome,  
 The palaces proud of Susa, the legended walis of Rome,  
 In the earliest days of Egypt, in evil-starred Nineveh,  
 When your masters who be were whirling, inane in the Milky  
 Way,  
 In Pompei of the sorrows, ere the lava of hate was hurled  
 From the fiery mouth of the mountain, in the passionate days  
 of the world.

Older than all tradition, older than Ops or Thor,  
 Gods of the Dane or Roman, gods of the plough or war,  
 In dark preadamite ages used by the primitive man,  
 And unto his needs were shapen ere custom and cant began—  
 A servant to Talos the Potter were you in the ages dim  
 — But you helped in the drift of seasons to fashion the urn  
 for him.

But you're foul to the haughty woman, bediamonded slave of  
lust,

Who bows to a seignior's sabre, tinged with a coward's rust,  
Foul to the aping dandy with the glittering finger rings,  
You who have helped to fashion the charnel vault of the kings!  
—Ah! the lady fair is disdainful and loathingly looks askew,  
And the collared ass of the circle gazes in scorn at you,  
But some day you'll scatter the clay on grinning lady and lord,  
For yours is the cynical triumph over the sceptre and sword!

*Emperors pass in an hour, empires pass in a day,  
But you of the line and muck pile open the grave away.*

Tell me what are thy graces, what are the merits of thine?  
Answer ye slaves of the railway, answer ye dupes of the mine.  
What do you mean to the navy, moleskinned serf of the ditch,  
Piling the courts of pleasure up for the vampire rich?  
What do you mean to the muck-man, to Dives cringing in  
gyves?

Food to their little children, joy to their hapless wives,  
Who wear their fetters of being, down where no sun-shine  
comes  
In the Christian country of sorrows, the civilized land of  
slums.

Wonderful, ancient shovel, tool of the labour slave!  
To you the sparkle of silver the hammer and furnace gave.  
For you the virginal forest was stripped of its stateliest trees,  
And you have the temper that flame has, and you have the  
graces of these.

Athens and Rome have known you, London and Paris know,  
You'll raise the towns of the future when the towns of the  
present go—

A race will esteem and praise you in the days that are to be,  
When I am silent and songless and the headstone crumbles  
on me!

*Wonderful navy shovel, the days are near at hand  
When you'll rise o'er sword and sceptre a mighty power in the land.*

---

### The Song of Werner.

(From the German of Scheffel.)

O Roman maid! why do you try  
To win a heart you cannot hold  
With honeyed word and witching eye?  
For ah! the ancient fire is cold.

Beyond the virgin Alpine snow,  
My lady sleeps beside the Rhine—  
Upon her grave three roses blow,  
Her grave—who was the love of mine.

O, maid of Rome! you cannot move  
The heart that sorrow steeped in gloom;  
For me alone but one to love,  
My lady sleeping in the tomb.

### A Spring Idyll.

On my hangings of arras  
Dewdrop and sunlight comingle,  
The music of woods that are endless,  
And infinite seas  
That come with the voices  
Of storm or of calm to the shingle  
In the lilac gray blush of the dawn,  
On the sensuous breeze.

So full of promise is earth  
As a child's gentle laughter,  
The sapphire tints of the water  
Are fair to the eyes—  
The present is only,  
I know not a past nor hereafter,  
And forth from my covering  
Of saffron and ermine I rise.

## With the Breakdown Squad.

*"Wreck of the city express, sir,"  
The newspaper sellers yell,  
The people are buying, buying,  
My! don't the papers sell,  
And the publishers say in their usual way  
"Business is doing well."*

*"A tanner down on a three spot,  
Losing again, be blowed!"  
"Give me a fill of tobacco."  
"Here, a one that I owed."  
"Losing again with——Heavens!  
A passenger off the road!"*

Seventy-nine was the engine,  
Speediest on the line—  
We rushed to the van like demons  
And waited the signal sign,  
Then flashing afar like a scymitar  
Went the flame of seventy-nine.

Out in the night as phantoms,  
Out to the wreck we steal,  
Horror urging our heart-beats,  
Feeling as sinners feel—  
The rails like souls in torment  
Whimpered beneath the wheel.

Above us the moon went sailing  
White as the face of death,  
Watching the engine gliding  
Over the world beneath,  
While we pulled at our pipes in silence,  
And heard our every breath.

The engine fire is cleaving  
A path to the stars on high—  
The cirrus clouds in the heaven  
Like burial shrouds go by,  
Sent from the dim hereafter  
For men and women who die.

In the gaunt and gelid cutting  
Ghouls of the darkness brood,  
A lone, belated raven  
Cries through the solitude,  
And the signals rise to danger  
Redder than human blood.



A crash of brakes in the darkness—  
 A rush and a crash again :  
 Men are wailing in anguish,  
 Women laugh in their pain—  
 As a prayer that's prayed by a grave new **made**  
 Is the groan of the coupling chain.

The rails are splashed with crimson,  
 There's blood on the catcher bar,  
 The writhing engine hisses  
 Through the sky-roofed abattoir—  
 As the flame in a midnight churchyard  
 Is the light of each chilly star.

" Out with the lint and bandage—  
 See are the stretchers spread—  
 Out with a man to the signal  
 And guard the line ahead.  
 Haste, and look to the living  
 Before you bother the dead."

There's sorrow deeper than tears  
 That words in vain may speak—  
 The tearless mother watches  
 The red on her baby's cheek,  
 And downcast unwet lashes  
 Tell of the hearts that break.

Out in the night and the horror  
 We labour and curse or pray,  
 " Give me a drink of water——"  
 " I'll meet her some other day——"  
 We place the maimed on the stretchers,  
 The dead in the six-foot way.

" Two inches wide in the gauging,  
 Out with the ramps and—yes,  
 The facing points must have done it—  
 Lord, what an awful mess!  
 But hurry and have it ready  
 For passing the night express."

" *Awful railway disaster.*"  
*The newspapers chronicle—*  
*The men in the streets are buying—*  
*Gracious ! the papers sell.*  
*And the publishers say in their usual way*  
*" Business is doing well."*

### In the Midnight.

A splash on the dusky water,  
 A cry on the winter air,  
 As from the pit abysmal  
 Rises a soul's despair.

The human ghouls of midnight  
 Shiver beneath the snow,  
 The painted women in terror  
 Stand, and listen and—go.

Up in the deep of heaven,  
 Gloomy and ghostly gray,  
 The cry of the lost one falters—  
 Falters and dies away.

Only a cry in the darkness,  
 Only a swirl in the tide,  
 Only a sinful woman  
 Crossing the Great Divide !

## The Pioneer.

He was a servant boy and he  
 Married a maid of his own degree,\*  
 Rented a plot of the mountain lands,  
 And faced the wild with willing hands,  
 Where the whortleberry and monkshood grew,  
 And the night shade steeped in the poison dew.  
 The juniper covered the rocky ledge,  
 The bramble grew to the torrent's edge ;  
 The meadow land was rough and damp,  
 With here a rock and there a swamp ;  
 The pines came flocking around his door ;  
 The cold spring oozed through the cabin floor,  
 But, save for his wife, companionless,  
 He raised his hands to the wilderness.

The pine went down before his axe,  
 The scanty corn grew up in his tracks,  
 With shovel and spade the mead was drained,  
 With weary labour the brook was chained,  
 With his simple faith, and two men's power,  
 A giant he wrought through sun and shower,  
 And of every yard he dared dispute  
 With the wild, it drove him back a foot,  
 For its ways are many, its strength is great,  
 And man is conquered soon or late.

The woman died in a twelvemonth's space,  
 And left him alone in the gloomy place,  
 But sorrowful, silent, yet unsubdued,  
 He delved and drilled and hammered and hewed,  
 Clearing the brambles, breaking the stones,  
 Till the fever set in his aching bones,  
 And the jeering wraith of the wild in wrath  
 Flung him in scorn from out its path.

Then the corn rotted, the drain fell low,  
 Again the bramble began to grow,  
 The sapling grew by the fallen log,  
 And he died in his hut as dies a dog,  
 Shivering, thirsty, afraid, alone,  
 Unhappy, uncared for, and unknown.  
 . . . . This is the story fraught with fear,  
 The tale of the rustic pioneer.

After him came the mine and mill,  
 A city was built upon the hill ;  
 There bearded fools in the council sat,  
 And jabbered their views upon this and that,  
 But no one knew or cared to hear,  
 The tale of the early pioneer.

### The Navyy Chorus.

'Twas in the beginning of ages,  
 There came to the make of the nav—  
 Vy, work and the lowest of wages  
 Ever a mortal could have,  
 Bread, with its age for leaven,  
 Rows, and the prison cell,  
 Few of the gifts of heaven,  
 And most of the vices of hell,  
 Time, and dislike to do it,  
 Love, for the wine when red,  
 And a bibulous leaning to it  
 Despite what the sages said.  
 And the demons took in hand  
 Moleskin, leather, and clay,  
 Oaths embryonic and  
 A longing for Saturday,  
 Kneestraps and blood and flesh,  
 A chest exceedingly stout,  
 A soul—(which is a ques-  
 Tion open to many a doubt),  
 And fashioned with pick and shovel,  
 And shapened in mire and mud,  
 With life of the road and hovel,  
 And death of the line or hod,  
 With fury and frenzy and fear  
 That his strength might endure for a span  
 From birth, through beer to bier,  
 The link 'twixt the ape and the man.  
 They gave him a will to strive  
 And earn the pittance which  
 Can barely keep him alive  
 To slave in the dirty ditch—  
 Poorhouse and prison they wrought,  
 So he might enter therein  
 When idleness fell his lot  
 Or poverty led to sin.  
 They have given him transient joys,  
 They have given him space for delight,  
 The model, its riot and noise,  
 And night, and the fleas of the night,  
 The jeer of the better dressed neighbour,  
 And curses to every breath,  
 Labour, and dodging of labour,  
 Foreknowledge of sudden death—  
 Foredoomed to go to the devil,  
 He carries a swearing gift.\*

\* Swearing is not a habit but a gift.—From the Diary of Moleskin Joe.



His life is a path of evil  
Between a shift and a shift.

### Twenty One.

We spend our years as a tale that is told badly. — From Moleskin Joe's Diary.

We are born unto trouble as the smoke goes up the lum.—  
Ibid.

Dossing it here in the model, dreary, bedraggled, dry,  
They're cooking their grub on the hot-plate, and I have got  
none to fry,  
But still there's a bed for twopence, so I'll go to sleep if I  
can,  
Go a boy to my slumber and rise to-morrow a man.

Twenty and one to-morrow, twenty and one and not  
A cent for the weary years that with shovel and bar I've  
wrought—  
Out on my own since childhood, down on my luck since  
birth,  
I who belong to the holiest civilized land on earth.

I've done my graft on the dead line, where the man with the  
muck-rake is.\*  
Where the model smells I have dossed it in this woeful world  
of His,  
While others were spending their springtime learning to  
please and pray,  
I've fought for my right of living my own particular way.

Oft I put cash to the bankers, banked it and lost till broke,  
Watching it tanner by tanner pass to the sharper's poke,  
And many a night in the hovel brag was the game we  
played,  
When I who was versed in the shovel fell to a heavy spade.

Horses ran on the racecourse and won as a matter of course—  
I've lost a trifle of money backing the other horse.  
Beer, the hope of the dead-line! beer, the joy of the soul!  
Why would I pine and worry when beer can make me  
whole?†

---

\* Where no oxen is the crib is clean, but much increase is by the strength of the ox.—Prov. xiv., 4.

† Let him drink and forget his poverty.—Prov. xxxi., 7.

And money is round to go round. Horses and wine, and  
yes,

Women are fond of finery, women are fond of dress—  
Oh, pretty as girls are pretty, usual hair and eyes,  
Golden and blue, etcetera, choke full of smiles and sighs.

Eyes of a luring siren, a hell of a blarneying tongue,  
Old are the arts of women, and I was so very young,  
Another came round to woo her, and sudden she took to it,  
I hugged a delusion in hairpins, got done like a frog on the  
spit.

Seven years on the muckpile—God, but I'm feeling sick!  
Sick of the slush and the shovel, sick of the hammer and  
pick,  
Labour endless and thankless, labour that's never done—  
Is it sinful to doubt of heaven at penniless twenty-one?

Not the price of a schooner, and, Lord, but I'm feeling dry;  
They're grubbing it up on the hot-plate, but I've got noth-  
ing to fry—  
Still I can doss on twopence, and I'll go to sleep if I can—  
Go a boy to my slumber and rise to-morrow a man!



## A Geological Nightmare.

The lurid volcanoes were guarding the pole,  
 The sinister flames reached the Northern star—  
 I wandered through ages untold with my soul  
 And the grim fellowship of the plesiosaur,  
 In the regions of felspar and red syenite,  
 Where the mammoth was romping in furious glee,  
 Where the ichthyosaur chased the slim belemnite,  
 Through the lava-tinged waves of a Triassic sea.

On the clubmoss I saw the wild dinosaur feed,  
 From the primeval tree swung the anthropoid ape,  
 Through the network of fern and cycad and reed  
 Crashed the long brontosaur of the cumbersome  
     shape;  
 The grim armadillo that wallowed in slime,  
 The lizard and serpent that flew in the air,  
 Looked weird in that eerie pre-adamite time  
 'Neath the luminous sun or the stellary bear.

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*

But where are they gone to, the mammoth and auk?  
 The dodo and dragon—say, where are they gone?  
 In the Triassic beds and the Eocene chalk  
 They have fallen asleep and are slumbering on.  
 The knight of the sickle has numbered their days,  
 And Nature embalmed them in shells and in stones,  
 And we their descendants in boundless amaze,  
 Discuss them, or pore on their fossilized bones.

(This verse following is supposed to contain the moral.)

Thus "we" even pass from the gentian dome,  
 And follow the trail of the monsters that saw  
 The heaven of stars that ne'er glimmered on Rome,  
 Adown to the vale of ineffable awe—  
 We go with the pallor of fear on our face,  
 They went from the fight with the bloodstain and scar,  
 And the man and the maiden must rest in the place  
 Where they wait them the dragon and ichthyosaur!

### The Departed.

Down from the open spaces where the banshee wails to the  
 moon,  
 From the lonely moorland places where the witches hold  
 domain,  
 Like a ghost of the past the midnight blast wails at my  
 window pane;  
 Out of the night and the silence it comes to my window pane,  
     Full of a longing vain.  
 It has wafted thro' her burial shroud, and the matted coils of  
 her hair,  
 Where the ghouls of the gloom foregather over the tomb  
 wherein  
 She moulders away to the senseless clay—she who was free  
 from sin.  
 Heaven! the grave and its horrors, ugly and dark as sin,  
     And the beautiful maid therein!

Sunlight and moonlight and starlight, interblent with the  
 dew,  
 The modesty of the passion flower, the youthful, hopeful  
 glow—  
 She was greater to me than the world to be, than anything  
 mortals know,  
 Greater by far than life or death, or aught that the mortals  
 know  
     In this evil-starred world below.  
 And the weeping wind in the darkness lingers around her  
 tomb,  
 Presses her clay cold tresses and lips where my lips have lain,  
 And I hear it say in its wistful way—When do we meet again,  
 When do you meet your olden love and keep your tryst again?  
     Says the wind at the window pane.



## The House of Rest.

Unto a land unknown to me I came on some strange mission  
sent,

A lonely pilgrim from the night I wandered on a wonder  
way,

And said, "I'll seek athrough the world for rest and unalloyed  
content,"

And sought beneath the frigid stars, and sought beneath the  
fretful day.

I saw the House of Toil, and there the people died for lack of  
bread,

There gnawing hunger kept her rule relentless o'er the  
battered roof,

And in the House of Love they wept for spoken words and  
words unsaid—

I gripped my staff in mute despair and firmly kept myself  
aloof.

The House of Wealth was fair to see, all damascened and  
diapered,

But inside riot reigned supreme, and sated men had blighted  
health,

While outside gaunt-eyed forms went by, and starving  
children's cries were heard,

And godless ones with sinful souls crept in and ransacked it  
by stealth.

The House of God was passing grand, with moulded arch and  
sculptured door,

With picture, psalter, pulpit, pew, with printed prayer and  
priceless pyx,

But from within an endless wail was wafted upwards evermore.

And hair was rent and sackcloth worn beneath the silent  
crucifix.

The House of Azreel stands alone, and greater than abyssmal  
night

The gloom of it, and depth of it, unruffled by the softest  
breath—

The door is ope, I enter there, and dressed in robes of pallid  
white,

I greet the worm, and rest me in the House of Azreel and of  
Death.

And here where never mellow morn may send a ray of light or  
bliss,

Where never lingering winds are borne, where never  
maiden's voice is heard,

Afar from holiness and hate, from kindness and the soulless  
kiss,

I sleep content for endless years and never wish to speak a  
word.

## The Death of Moleskin.

Here lies the remains of John Todd,  
Not dead, but drunk, by God!

From his Diary.

Joe is dead? Of course he is,  
Dead as any nail can be,  
Look upon that face of his—  
See, if you are sober, see  
The unutterable peace  
Stamped upon his countenance—  
See, and let your prattle cease,  
Give the dead man half a chance.

Joe is dead? Of course he's dead;  
Hair dishevelled on his brow,  
Lay him on the model bed,  
Nought avails to wake him now.  
See, the jar is almost full—  
Look, I've piles and piles of dough—  
Moleskin, have another pull.  
Not an answer. Poor—old—Joe.

Give the fallen man his due,  
He was one that always could  
Take a modest pint or two,  
Just as any navvy should,  
Do a week or two in jile,  
Strike a bargain with a fence,  
Fight his man in perfect style,  
Play the game, and stump the pence.

Poor old Joe is lying dead  
Drunk as e'er a man can be,  
Lay some laager near his head  
So when waking he may see—  
Softly let us go to sleep.  
Be your voices hushed and low.  
Hark his snoring loud and deep—  
Peace be with your slumber, Joe.

## The Valley.

A fairy like valley, with grim mountains hiding it,  
 Peacefully sleeping 'mong meadow lands fair,  
 A river of carmine and silver dividing it,  
 And scent of the wild-flower filling the air.  
 Never a gray mist comes earthwards enshrouding it,  
 There never weepeth the cypress or yew,  
 Only the night-shadows lovingly clouding it,  
 Or trellised cirrus with stars peeping through.

Up by the braes, there the heather bells cluster,  
 Down by the stream blooms the anemone,  
 Guarding the lane, see the bright daisies muster  
 The starry battalions by hedgerow and tree.  
 Over the sedges a streamlet is flinging its  
 Frivolous waters in vermeil-tinged spray,  
 Over the fallow a wild bird is singing its  
 Song of delight to the ears of the day.

A woodland is there and the blackberries grow in it,  
 And grey gnarled oaks that the ages have bent,  
 Blossoms as white and as pure as the snow in it,  
 Fair as the stars in the deep firmament.  
 A shadowy pool where the green water-cresses are  
 Languidly floating in sensuous rest,  
 Is hidden 'mid ferns that with tremulous tresses are  
 Playing with glee in the breath of the west.

A valley of dreams, with the dim mountains hiding it,  
 Streamlets of silver through meadowlands fair,  
 A river of carmine and sapphire dividing it,  
 And scent of the wild flowers filling the air.

## The Old Men.

There's a handful of meal in the barrel, and a little oil in the  
 cruse,  
 We wear out our thin-soled sandals, they tan for the next  
 year's shoes,  
 And whet their axe at the grindstone, while ours hangs blunt  
 on the wall,  
 And willingly shapen the roof-tree, though ours is ready to fall.  
 The old fleece rots on the wether, the new fleece whirls in the  
 loom,  
 They weave the cloth for the bridal, we fashion the shroud for  
 the tomb,  
 Who followed the path as we found it from dawn to decline of  
 day,  
 Till the great world lies behind us, before us the lonely way.

Our sons go into the forest, our sons go out to the mead,  
 And labour with saw or with sickle, everyone unto his need,  
 Our daughters will meet them at even, with smile and with  
 simper and sigh,  
 And the love that their mothers bore us, in days that have  
 drifted by;  
 On their lips the red blood crimsons, and their golden tresses  
 glow,  
 But we've seen the red lips whiten and the tresses turn to  
 snow.

What makes us envy the moments they snatch from the swift  
 winged fate,  
 And the fury that follows after catching them soon or late?  
 Some fierce inherent hatred the brute of the wilderness bore  
 As he lost command of the wolfpack when young and swift  
 no more,  
 Some olden envious instinct the hoary chieftain had  
 When the reins of his despot power passed to a beardless lad;  
 Ours is the useless prattle, the solace of Solomon,  
 When he loathed the maids of his harem, and the days of his  
 lusts were gone.  
 With the scorn of the young to goad us, and the doom that  
 dogs our feet,  
 We are the olden cynics, wise in our own conceit.



There's a handful of meal in the barrel, and a little oil in the  
 cruse,  
 Which our toothless loves will bake us—we who are little use—  
 Let our sons go out to the hunting, let our daughters simper  
 and smile;  
 We wait for the welcome summons—only a little while,  
 For we are the useless old men, wrinkled and bent and gray,  
 With the things we have done behind us, before us the lamp-  
 less way;  
 We are the useless old men with faltering, failing breath,  
 With a stake in the great Hereafter, sealed by the hand of  
 Death.

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### Fishing.

When the sheep on the brae are lying still  
 And the lone lake waters weep,  
 When the pale faced moon comes over the hill  
 And my brothers and sisters sleep,  
 I wander out by the brooklet's edge  
 Where moon-limned waters run,  
 And see the fays from the trailing sedge  
 Come silently one by one—

Come silently out to fish for trout  
 With a hook of silver fine,  
 A rye-grass stalk for a fishing rod,  
 And a gossamer thread for line.

But there isn't a fish in all the brook,  
 And it's me that ought to know,  
 For I caught the little minnows and took  
 Them with me long ago—  
 I lifted them up from the golden sand  
 Into my pannikin small,  
 Yet the fairies stay till the dawn of day  
 And never catch one at all.

I took the little minnows myself  
 And left them down in the well,  
 As nobody saw me place them there,  
 Sure no one at all can tell  
 The fairy fishers where they are gone,  
 The pretty wee fish inside  
 The well that is marked by St. Colum's cross  
 And the cross of good Saint Bride!

### Dreamings.

The bog blossom's golden pistil,  
 The shimmering torrent's crystal  
 Fling of its sapphire waters, crested with foam-drift white,  
 The moorland and scent of the musky  
 Wild flower borne on the dusky  
 Wings of the wandering breezes that carry the starry night,

Come with dreams of the wondrous olden  
 Times, when fancy's golden  
 Wand lay o'er my boyhood, filling my mind with joy—  
 I can see the moor and the dimly  
 Waving gorse, and grimly  
 The strong man smiles at the yearning that made the life of  
 the boy.

Ghosts of the olden faces,  
 Voices from silent places,  
 Eyes that are filled with laughter, eyes that with tears are wet,  
 Into the days so gloomy  
 Come in my musings to me—  
 One who has ne'er forgotten, one who can ne'er forget.

### Run Down.

In the grim dead-end he lies, with passionless filmy eyes,  
 English Ned, with a hole in his head,  
 Staring up at the skies.

The engine driver swore as often he swore before—  
 "I whistled him back from the flamin' track,  
 An' I couldn't do no more."

The gaffer spoke through the 'phone "Platelayer Seventy-  
 one  
 Got killed to-day on the sixfoot way  
 By a goods on the city run.

"English Ned was his name,  
 No one knows whence he came,  
 He didn't take mind of the road behind  
 And none of us are to blame."

They turned the slag in the bed  
 To cover the clotted red,  
 Washed the joints and the crimsoned points,  
 And buried poor English Ned.

*In the drear dead-end he lies  
 With the earth across his eyes  
 And a stone to say  
 How he passed away  
 To a shift beyond the skies.*

## Ryan.

Ryan the gaffer of ours spoke, and the words that he said  
 Were, "I've seen them go under the engine and drop as  
     a bullock drops dead,  
 Slavering their blood on the point-rods, burst like a flea by  
     the wheel,  
 I've looked at it often and often and little of pity I feel—  
 They come and they learn and leave me, playing the fool  
     while they can,  
 That's if the engine don't grip them," said Ryan, the cynical  
     man.

Ryan the gaffer of ours, was rough and undoubtedly rude,  
 And swore in a natural manner, with curses uncultured and  
     crude,  
 And one said, "The engine will take you some minute ere you  
     are aware,"  
 But Ryan the gaffer of ours said, "Let it, I'm damned if I  
     care,  
 When Death comes down this way I'll meet him, and laugh in  
     his face if I can."  
 These were the boastings of Ryan; we certainly feared for  
     the man.

Ryan, the gaffer of ours was cursing his men on the track,  
 An engine as quick as the devil came silently up on his back;  
 Yet he laughed as though he enjoyed it, "To keep up appear-  
     ance," we said,  
 And he went to the misty Hereafter with a hole in the back  
     of his head.  
 But no one could really deny it, he died as but brave fellows  
     can,  
 And smilingly went to the devil did Ryan that cynical man.



## The Waters.

Placid it lies as death and passionless as the grave,  
With the pallid moonbeams flung like corpse-lights o'er its  
wave,

Stuck in the hunchbacked hill sluggish, silent, apart,  
Brooding in durance vile, sad in its inmost heart,  
Whimpering around the face, the sluice and the hardfast wall,  
The great dam slumbers alone, sore of its endless thrall—  
Down at the slimy base men toil in the dreary pit,  
Under the shadow of night, cowering under it.

Freed from their prison walls, glad from the pent-up place,  
Down the trough of the hill streamlets on streamlets race  
Mad with the joy they feel, full of a wild desire,  
Springing from ledge to ledge in molten silvery fire.

One by one they rise, the makeshift, roughcast huts,  
Where the knoll across the run of the little waters juts,  
Here by the hotplate's glow the shivering, shabby tramp  
Spells out the Police News in the glare of the naphtha lamp,  
One man handles his gold, another writes to his love,  
In the reeking gloomy hut in the shade of the dam above,  
A dozen crowd to the school, watching the gamblers play—  
A crash on the face of the hill, and the maddened dam gives  
way!

A swirl, and the walls go down, the walls and the watchers  
both,

A screech as the girders jamb—a prayer that is half an oath;  
The sluggish sandhole spews, swallows and spews again,  
The cesspool fills and chokes the throat of the sated drain.

The flood breaks over the wall, foaming in ecstasy,  
The black mud scurries before as it shivers the sluices free,  
The mountain shrubs uptorn, effortless share its path,  
It madly whirls on the bend in all its riotous wrath.

“Winning! a running flush—Christ! has the dam gone loose!”  
The tramp gets up with a curse, and grasping his Police News,  
The gamblers gather their stakes, curious, undismayed,  
The miser grabs at his wealth, the lover rises afraid,  
The bulging wall breaks in, the roof falls through at a blow,  
A moment to think of a prayer, and breathe it before they go—  
A moment, and then the flood reels through the broken wall,  
Caught like fleas in the fire, they splutter and choke and fall—  
Down the face of the hill, the waters roar as they spread,  
Bearing in braggart glee their freight of unshriven dead.

*They builded a wall of stone with cunning, patience and skill,  
And the waters sulked behind brooding on very ill,  
Till their pent-up rage broke forth on the men who curbed their will.*

## The Conger Eel.

The waters dance on the ocean crest, or swirl in the cyclone's  
 breath,  
 But down below where the divers go, they sullenly sleep in  
 death,  
 Where the slime is holding the cutter's stays, where the  
 sailors' bones are white,  
 Where the phantoms sweep through the eerie deep in realms  
 of endless night,  
 'Tis there it holds its sway supine, and plaits its every reel,  
 The silent, sibilant, sombre, sinuous, stealthy Conger eel,  
 The silky Conger eel, the solemn-eyed Conger eel—  
 It circles by where the dead men lie, the spectral Conger eel.

The devil fish, grim in its cavern dim, a sinister siren lies,  
 And the shark will seize on its frightened prey where the  
 spumous surges rise,  
 The dolphin may play in its riotous way where the waters are  
 calm and slow,  
 The whale may spout like a geyser out by the ice of an Arctic  
 floe,  
 But down a hundred fathoms or more below the lance-edged  
 keel,  
 It slily slides 'neath the shifty tides, the sensuous Conger eel,  
 The lily soft Conger eel, the green-eyed Conger eel.  
 It grovels in grime and the stagnant slime, the hideous Conger  
 eel.

And there in its sluggish realms of woe it has reigned for  
 unnumbered years,  
 It feasted of old on the vikings bold, and the Spanish  
 buccaneers,  
 And kings and the sons of kings have gone to lie on its banquet  
 board,  
 And many a lady young and fair from the arms of her drowning  
 lord—  
 But down below no blush of shame comes to the lips that steal  
 The kisses soft from the lady fair; the passionless Conger eel  
 The cynical Conger eel, carnivorous Conger eel,  
 May lie on the breast of the maiden chaste and never a tremor  
 feel—  
 That vampire Conger eel.

## The Ballad of the Long Dam.

'Twas on the day the Dam gave way, I mind it awfully well,  
Moleskin Joe and Carroty Dan had a row about Riley's gel—  
Good for a chew! Well, seeing its you, I think I'll yarn it out,  
Just turn your eye on that wall hard by and see is the boss  
about.

Wal, first let me tell how Riley's gel was pretty as women go,  
And whiles she went out with Carroty Dan, and whiles she  
went out with Joe.

The way of a man with a maid, 'tis said, is strange, and it's  
scripture true,

But stranger by far you'll find they are, the wonderful ways of  
two.

Day in and out it was fight about, night after night the same,  
And they batter it here, a trifle queer, as there ain't no rules  
in the game,

A throw or a grip, a kick or a trip no wool-padded, kid-gloved  
play

You can go for your man in any style your own peculiar way.

'Twas on the day the Long Dam burst, Moleskin he bummed  
his sub,

And went and got boozed as he often did down at the nearest  
pub,

Primed to the neck he weltered back, and sought out Car-  
roty D.,

And the rest of us quickly formed a ring for the fight we knew  
would be.

'Twas a fight and a half that blessed day, and as hard as ever  
I saw,

Moleskin Joe had the track of a blow of a shoe on his bearded  
jaw,

Carroty Dan had some teeth bunged out, and his eyes bunged  
up as well,

When some one shouted, "The Long Dam's burst, slide like  
the very hell!"

We heard the piles in the breastwork creak, break like a twig  
and fall,

We saw the riotous water crash over the broken wall,

The roots and the furze and the rocks uphurled, go like a wash  
of snow,

Then sudden I minded of Riley's gel alone in the hut below—

Alone in the path of the loosened flood. . . . I ran like  
the very wind,  
With hurl and groan, by hollow and stone, I heard it breaking  
behind,  
I heard it urge its curling surge to the moan of the failing  
stay,  
And charge the banks in endless ranks forcing its headstrong  
way.

And still the waters vomited forth, on cabin and copse and  
bent,  
And still on my errand lightning-winged over the ridge I  
went—  
How I got saved, and how we were sayed, is more than I'm  
fit to tell,  
But I mind of beating it by a neck along with old Riley's gel.

That is the tale. 'Tis a dirty job, and ours is a rotten trade.  
It takes a while to gather a pile with the help of a shovel and  
spade—  
There's Moleskin there a-shovelling dirt, and Carrotty with a  
hod,  
And Riley's daughter's married to me—honest, so help me  
God.



### The Calling Voice.

The great world voice is calling, and the streams have lost  
their glory,

For their restless waters journey to the ever moving sea,  
And I am ever yearning as they seem to breathe a story  
Of the better things to be, the better things to be.

The breeze is saying, "Hasten, we will cross the seas to-  
gether,

You and I together to a fairer world than this,  
Say does the mountain keep you and the purple waving  
heather,  
Or the little girl you kiss, the little girl you kiss?"

No more the valley charms me, and no more the torrents  
glisten,

My love is plain and homely, and my thoughts are far away,  
The great world voice is calling, and with throbbing heart I  
listen,

And I cannot but obey, I cannot but obey.



## The Song of the Drainer.

He is the Drainer.

Out on the moorland bleak and gray, using his spade in a primitive way, through chilly evening and searing day. Call him a fool, and well you may—

He is the Drainer.

The toil of the Drainer.—

Only the simple work to do, to plod and delve the quagmire through, for thirty pence, his daily screw.—The labour is healthy—but not for you,

Just for the Drainer.

The artless Drainer.—

It doesn't require a lot of skill to dig with a spade or hammer a drill, but its bad enough for a man when ill with fevery bones or a wintry chill—

Even a Drainer.

The home of the Drainer.—

A couple of stakes shoved into the ground, a hole for a window, a roof tree crowned with rushes and straw, and all around a waste where lichens and weeds abound

Is the home of the Drainer.

The rugged Drainer.—

The sleepy bog breezes chant their hymn, the rushes and lilies are soft and slim, the deep dark pools the sunbeams limn—but what do these beauties matter to him—

The rugged Drainer?

The poor old Drainer.—

Some day he'll pass away in a cramp, where the sundews gleam and the bogbines ramp, and go like a ghost from the drag and the damp—the poor old slave of the dismal swamp.

The hapless Drainer.

Such is the Drainer.—

Voiceless slave of the solitude, rude as the draining shovel is rude—Man by the ages of wrong subdued, marred, misshapen, misunderstood—

Such is the Drainer.

## Padding It.

An empty stomach, an empty sack and a long road.

—From Moleskin's Diary.

Hashing it out like niggers on a two and a tanner sub.  
Everything sunk with our uncle, little to burn at the pub.  
Fifty and six were our hours, and never an extra shift.  
And whiles we were plunging at banker, and whiles we were  
studying thrift—

Sowing and patching the trousers, till their parts were more  
than the whole,

Tailoring, cobbling, and darning, grubbed on a sausage and  
roll—

Thrift on a fourpenny hour, a matter of nineteen bob.  
But we glanced askew at the gaffer, and stuck like glue to the  
job,

We of the soapless legion, we of the hammer and hod,  
Human swine of the muck pile, forever forgotten of God.

"Hearing of anything better?" one unto one would say,  
As we toiled in all moods of the weather, and cursed at the  
dragging day,

Winking the sweat off our lashes, shaking the wet off our hair,  
Wishing to God it was raining, praying to Him it would fair.  
"Curse a job in the country," one unto one would reply,

Looking across his shoulder, to see if the boss was by—  
Arrogant March came roaring down on the year, and then  
A rumour spread in the model, and gladdened the navy men.

Was it the highland slogan? was it the bird of the north,  
Out of its frost rimmed eyrie that carried the message forth?  
"Jackson has need of navvies, the navvies who understand  
The graft of the offside reaches, to labour where God has  
bann'd,

Men of the sign of the moleskin who swear by the soundless  
pit,

Men who are eager for money and hurry in spending it,  
Bluchers and velvet waistcoats, and kneestraps below their  
knees,

The great unwashed of the model, Jackson has need of these."

Then the labourer on the railway laughed at the engine peals,  
And threw his outworn shovel beneath the flange of the  
wheels.

The hammerman at the jumper slung his hammer aside,  
Lifted his lying money and silently did a slide.

The hod was thrown on the mortar, the spade was flung in the  
drain,

The grub was left on the hotplate, and the navvies were our  
again.

All the roads of the Kingdom converged, as it were, to one.  
Which led away to the northward under the dusk and dawn,  
And out on the road we hurried, rugous and worn and thin,  
Our cracking joints a-staring out through our parchment skin,  
Some of us trained from our childhood, to swab in the slush  
and muck,

Some who were new to the shovel, some who were down on  
their luck,

The prodigal son half home-sick, the jail-bird, villin and thief,  
The chucker-out from the gin shop, the lawyer minus a brief,  
The green hand over from Oir'lan', the sailor tired of his ships,  
Some with hair of silver, some with a woman's lips,  
Old, anæmic, and bilious, lusty, lanky and slim,  
Padding it, slowly and surely, padding it resolute, grim.

We dossed it under the heavens, watching the moon ashine,  
And a tremor akin to palsy quivering down the spine,  
We drank of the spring by the roadside using the hands for  
a cup,

Stole the fowl from the farm before the farmer was up,  
We lit our fires in the darkness drumming up in the flame,  
Primitive, rude, romantic men who were old at the game,  
On through the palpable darkness, and on through the tinted  
dawn,

The line of moleskin and leather fitfully plodded on ;  
And no one faltered or weakened, and no one stumbled or fell,  
But now and again they grumbled, saying, "It's worse nor  
hell."

The rain came splatting earthwards, slaving in our face,  
But we never hinted of shelter and never slackened our pace,  
The mornings were cool and lightsome, we never hurried a bit,  
"Slow and easy is better than hashing and rushing it."

Ever the self-same logic, steady, sober and suave—  
"The hasty horse will stumble," "hashing to make your  
grave,"

"Easy and slow on the jumper, will drive a hole for the blast."  
"Rome was long in the building, but the grandeur of Rome  
is past."

You speak of the road in your verses, you picture the joy of  
it still,

You of the specs and the collars, you who are geese of a quill,  
You pad it along with a wine-flask and your pockets crammed  
with dough,

Eat and drink at your pleasure, and write how the flowers  
grow—

If your stomach was empty as pity, your hobnails were down  
at the heels,

And a nor'-easter biting your nose off, then you would know  
how it feels,

A nail in the sole of your bladders jaggng your foot like a pin.

And every step on your journey was driving it further in,  
 Then out on the great long roadway, you'd find when you  
     went abroad,  
 The nearer you go to nature the further you go from God.

Through many a sleepy hamlet, and many a noisy town,  
 While eyes of loathing stared us, we who were out and down,  
 Looking aslant at the wineshop, talking as lovers talk,  
 Of the lure of the gentle schooner, the joy of Carroll's  
     Dundalk;

Sometimes bumming a pipeful, sometimes shooting the crow,  
 But ever onward and onward, fitfully, surely, slow,  
 On to the drill and the jumper, and on to the concrete bed,  
 On to the hovel and card school, the dirt-face, and slush ahead.

Thus was the long road followed—true is the tale I tell,  
 Ask my pals of the model—ask, they remember well—  
 Hear them tell how they tramped it, as they smoke at the bar  
     and spit,  
 The journey to Ballachulish, for this is the song of it.



## Back from Kinlochleven.

And the place that knew him, knows him no more.

The waterworks are finished and the boys have jacked the shovel.

See, the concrete board deserted for the barrow squad is gone,

The gambling school is bursted, there is silence in the hovel,  
For the lads are sliding townwards and are padding it since dawn.

Pinched and pallid are their faces from their graft in God-shunned places.

Tortured, twisted up their frames are, slow and lumbering their gait.

But unto their hopeful dreaming comes the town with lights a-gleaming.

Where the bar-men add more water, and the shameless women wait.

Eighteen months of day shift, night shift, easy, slavish, long or light shift,

Anchorites on musty bacon, crusty bread, and evil tea.

Sweated through the Summer till grim Winter came a hoary pilgrim,

Chasing from the meagre blanket the familiar, flighty flea\*.  
Then the days when through the cutting came the death-white snow-flakes drifting.

When the bar was chilled and frosted, and the jumper seared like hell,

When the hammer shook uncertain in the grimy hands up-lifting.

And the chisel bounced uncanny 'neath the listless strokes that fell.

But to Him give thanks 'tis over and the city fills the distance.

On the line of least resistance they are coming sure but slow,  
How they wait the truil and harlot, jail-bird, vagabond and varlet,

For there's many a bob to squander and the city ravens know!

Parasites from pub and alley welcome-in the grimed and greasy.

Gather round with wail and plaudit, eager for their dough and gin,

They are coming from the muckpile and they mean to take it easy,

They have pals to share their joy and incidentally their tin.

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\* The wicked flea, that all men pursueth.—From the Diary of Moleskin.



They are tabid and outworn, unpresentable, unshorn,  
 Occupants of many a model, wooers of the harridan,  
 Workers of the wildernesses, dressing as the savage dresses,  
 Crawling in the rear of progress, following the march of man.  
 Where grim nature reigneth lonely over gelid places only  
 Known to death and desolation, they have roughed it long  
 and hard,  
 Where the chronic river wallows in the refuse of the hollows,  
 And the thunderbolt is resting on the mountain tops it  
 scarred.

But 'tis over for the moment, and the heel-end of creation  
 Vomits back the men who roughed it to the town that sent  
 them forth,  
 They who face the death it threatened with a grim deter-  
 mination,  
 They who wrestled with the slayer incarnated in the North—  
 Go and see them primed with laager, drain them of the coppers  
 sought for  
 In the depths of desolation, in the byways of the beast.  
 Go and bum them of the ha'pence that like maniacs they  
 wrought for,  
 For they bear the famine bravely, but can never stand the  
 feast.

They are coming to the city, soon you'll see their rants and  
 quarrels,  
 See them marching off to prison, see them drinking day by  
 day.  
 In the dead-end of their labours they forgot your code of  
 morals,  
 They are ne'er intoxicated in the super-saintly way.  
 You will know them by their reeking shag, you'll know their  
 way of speaking,  
 You can spot them by their moleskins and their bluchers  
 battered down,  
 They are wild, uncultivated, maybe rather underrated—  
 But at anyrate you'll know them by their curses when in  
 town.



### The Song of the Lost.

What will be left when the siren city  
 Ceases to lure and ceases to pay,  
 When poverty hovers across my way,  
 When years have sullied my sinful grace?  
 No mother's love, and no father's pity,  
 No fondling lover, no children gay,  
 To plant a kiss on their mother's face.

The kisses I've had were born of passion,  
 And the love was the lust of brutal men  
 Wild from the bar or gambling den,  
 My jewels were bought in a soul's eclipse,  
 For I was gay in an evil fashion—  
 Queen of the sodden alley when  
 They paid for kissing my painted lips.

Look how the lamps of London twinkle,  
 Hark how the bells of London toll.  
 "Pledge thyself for the devil's dole,  
 But what avails when the brow shall wrinkle,  
 Fool of the empty tinsel show—  
 The lone regrets of a stricken soul,  
 The nightly wail of a sleepless woe?"

## Albert De Lacy.

If you are born by chance or rule in this respectable age,  
     you've got  
 To decently live off other folk, then die and decently rot—  
 Never do things as navvies do (that's if you move in a certain  
     set),  
 Eat your dinner and clean your nose, just according to  
     etiquette.

From the Diary of Moleskin Joe.

Albert De Lacy went out on the broad  
     Road that leads to the pit of sin,  
 And the friendship of men who carry the hod,  
     And live in the haunts that the devil is in.

Albert De Lacy, broken down  
     Swell of the London upper rank,  
 Who might have been a man about town  
     Who might have had cash in a city bank.

Albert De Lacy learned the curse,  
     And other things that the navvies know,  
 Years ago when he wrought with us  
     Down on the lines where the engines go.

Albert De Lacy wasn't bad,  
     As some of the evil-minded think,  
 Maybe now and again he had  
     Forgotten himself when full of drink.

Didn't care for the bank, perhaps,  
     Forgot his status as boys forget,  
 Mixed with reckless jolly chaps,  
     And bothered little of etiquette.

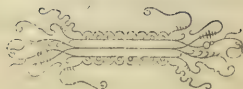
Albert De Lacy's days are done,  
     Didn't have time or wish to repent—  
 Only a boy of twenty-one  
     Who proved his manhood before he went.

The lifting screw was stuck in the rail,  
 Tightly wedged it gripped the steel,  
 Round the bend came the flying mail  
 Flashing fire from every wheel.

Albert De Lacy was working the screw—  
 He saw the engine and heard us shout—  
 "Heavens 'twill wreck her." What did he do?  
 He turned the handle, and threw it out

She cut him to pieces, but not before  
 The jack was safe in the six-foot way—  
 He did his duty, and needs no more  
 Pity or praise, we navvies say—

He did his duty as man to men,  
 Not by the rules of etiquette—  
 He was a man, and at judgment when  
 God is judging, He won't forget.



## The Pick.

In the depths of the pluvial season it gallantly stayed to your  
hand,

In the dead-end of woe and creation, afar in the furthestmost  
land,

When the saturnine heavens hung o'er you as dark as the ultimate tomb,

When the trough of the valley you gutted was filled with ineffable gloom,

When down in the depths of the planet uprooting the brontosaur's bed,

With the fire damp writhing around you, and a candle affixed to your head,

When the gold-seeking fever enthralled you, when you fitfully watered the pan,

Ever it strove to your bidding, ever it aided your plan.

Ready, resistless, reticent, friend of the conquering man!

See that its edge is like silver, tempered to try and be tried,  
Look on your pick as a lover would gaze on the girl at his side,

If it responds to your promptings, when the navy men hurry and sweat,

If it be proof to the tempest, when the clouds and the dirt-bed have met,

If its handle be graceful and lissome slipping and soft in the hand,

Brothers, 'tis meet for its mission, tend it, for ye understand ;

Try it with fire and with water, try it in sand and in rock,

See that the siag can't resist it, see that it beareth the shock,

Hurling the rock from its fastness, goring the destitute earth.

Tearing the guts of the tunnel, seeking the coal for the hearth

Down in the stygian darkness, ye who can reckon its worth!

Work it for days one and twenty, then if it's true to the test,

Look on your pick as a maiden, but often the former is best,

For the temper of women when broken, e'en heaven can't better the same,

But the pick will regain what it loses with the touch of the hammer and flame,

And for aye will it answer your yearning, be true to the trust that ye place,

But oftimes the falsest of females is fair in the glance of the face,

And fickle, and sure as she's fickle, your sweetheart in labour is true

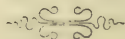
As long as there's grub on the hot-plate, as long as there's hashing to do,

While the hail-harried winter is scowling, while the skies of the summer are blue.



Enough! for the pick has been trusted, enough! for the pick  
 has been tried  
 In the uncharted lands of the world, past where the pathways  
 divide,  
 Where the many lead into the city of mimicry, aping and show,  
 Where the one leads away to the vastness, the infinite vastness  
 you know,  
 And there with the grim pioneer it wrought in the shine and  
 the shade,  
 While he feared in the gloom and the silence, afraid as a child  
 is afraid,  
 Pleased with his rough hand's caresses, slave to his wish and  
 his whim,  
 —Away on the fringe of the world, comrade and brother to  
 him.

Enough, for the pick has been trusted, in hazardous, desperate  
 years,  
 When the wine press was trodden alone for the vintage of  
 sorrow and tears.  
 Under the blight of the upas, the bane of the vampire's wing,  
 Shaping the founs of a temple, razing the keeps of a king;  
 To labour that stood as its sponsor for the fiery baptism given,  
 It has proved its worth, on a pitiless earth, and under the  
 eyes of heaven;  
 Staunch in the pitiless combat, vigorous, virile and bold,  
 To-day I give it the honour our fathers denied it of old,  
 To-day I have sung its praises, and told of the honour due  
 To the pick that was ever trusted, tried on the dead-line and  
 true.



## Down on the Dead End.

I've toiled at the end of creation, stripped to the trousers and  
 shirt,  
 I've hashed like the very damnation and squandered my money  
 like dirt,  
 And jobs that are nameless I've wrought in, and deeds that  
 are shameless I've done,  
 And fights without number I've fought in, and paid like the  
 deuce for my fun.

I've piled up the slush in the bucket, down to my knees in the  
 drift,  
 Wet till I felt I must chuck it, or drop like a mule at my shift,  
 In dreary and desolate places, with the boss standing glower-  
 ing by  
 At his men and their fungus-white faces, I've felt as if ready  
 to die.

Drink, and I've tried to keep from it, women and cards—'twas  
 the same,  
 The dog will return to his vomit, the devil is boss of the game,  
 The red of the wine cup has hidden the adders with poisonous  
 teeth,  
 The sunlight is bright on the midden, with the rot of the wide  
 world beneath.

Disheartened, discarded, disgusted, I'm down on the dead-line  
 once more,  
 Beggared, benighted and bursted, the jail or the workhouse  
 before—  
 Well, life had its trouble and worry, the Fates have been  
 devilish hard,  
 My chances went by in a hurry, I plunged on the rottenest  
 card.

I haven't a pipe-full of Carroll's to cheer me while tramping  
 it out,  
 And getting because of my morals a hell of a knocking about,  
 —Well! life was a foolhardy gamble and down in its by-ways I  
 strove,  
 And perhaps in the ultimate scramble I'll corner a shakedown  
 above.

# Hic Jacet.

And Nicanor lay dead in his harness.—2 Mac xv., 28.

---

The backwall hitch gave way,  
The bucket fell below,  
And pipe in teeth, it lay beneath, the corpse of Moleskin Joe,  
Of poor old Moleskin Joe.

The joke was on his lips,  
The shovel left the hand,  
The boys drew near and shook in fear they couldn't under-  
stand—  
Some day they'll understand.

He never spoke a word,  
But fell a broken reed,  
And sore dismayed his bedmate said—  
“He was a pal, indeed,  
A dam good pal, indeed.”

Of things he shouldn't do,  
Of other things he should,  
We will not tell, but wish him well where he has gone for good,  
From this old world for good.

The backwall hitch gave way,  
The bucket fell below,  
Let's hope the shift from out the drift was good for Moleskin  
Joe—  
God grant that it was so.

## The Long Road.

The white road leads through the meadows, on through  
the sunshine and shadows.

The endless road to anywhere, the road the navy knows ;  
Where the mountains soar in their starkness, piercing the light  
and the darkness.

The thin road lies like a ribbon, he follows it where it goes.

He has seen the dewdrops cluster where modest daisies muster,  
He has lain on earth's soft bosom, watched by the Milky  
Way,

Out in the places lonely, with the stars and the silence only,  
Chilled with the hate of winter, warmed with the love of  
May.

He has padded alone, while the vagrant breezes bore him the  
fragrant

Scent of the wayside flowers, or blooms from the hills afar,  
He has listened the torrents grumble at the hills from which  
they tumble,

He has seen the soft night kneeling to greet the evening  
star.

\* \* \* \* \*

Tired of the reeking hovel, weary of pick and shovel,

He wanders out on the white road in the evening's sheen of  
gold,

Watching the light that dims on the western hills of crimson,  
And longs for the last lone slumber and knows he is growing  
old.

He goes from the ones who knew him, those who were kindly  
to him,

Out on the lonely roadway, under the starlit dome,  
And follows the path that flies on into the dim horizon

Where the spectral moon-fire lies on the road that leads to  
home.

## The Ballad of MacIndoe.

MacIndoe was a Scotchman—had other failings, too,  
Unco sour and moody, hankered as Scotchmen do  
After the gill almighty—bibulous MacIndoe!

Out on a steamer southward breasting a heavy swell,  
The captain roared, "To the lifeboats," MacIndoe roared  
"To H—,"  
And stood by a whisky barrel aboard of the Heather Bell.

Out in the teeth of the swirling, ranting, riotous sea.  
The yardarms battered to larboard, the hatchways shattered  
to lee—  
(Something like that he told me the cook of The Buzzy Bee.)

The Bell went this way and that way, forward and back again,  
Then sank on the seething billows, leaving poor Mac alane,  
Perched on a whisky barrel out on the Spanish main.

But his was a courage undaunted, courage that never could  
fail,  
He placed himself up for a mainmast, spread out his coat for  
a sail,  
And wondering where he was going, he drifted before the gale.

On to his slippery foothold grimly and gaunt he clung,  
Till daybreak its shafts of carmine over the waters flung—  
"Noo," said the thirsty sailor, "I think I'll tak' oot the bung."

But the plans o' a moose or sailor gang aften times agley.  
And you'll hardly open a barrel, labour and tug as you may,  
Out on the frivolous ocean in the old methodical way.

So Sandy found to his terror, and cursed his luckless star,  
That poor benighted, sweating, swearing, sorrowing tar.  
Who mumbled loud in his anguish, "So near and yet so far."

He watched the languid ocean in leisurely wavelets roll;  
The fiery sun in the heaven was scorching his very soul—  
"Oh, for a raft of an iceberg, near tae the Arctic Pole."

He seated himself on his barrel and pondered on Auld Lang  
Syne,

Brose and bannocks and Burns, water and women and wine,  
Then scooped up the waves of the ocean, and drank of the arid  
brine.

Below the sensuous waters, above him the heavens grim  
What was it rose for a moment ominous, vague and dim?  
MacIndoe shuddered in horror—a shark was following him.



Night came dreary and darkling, he saw the cleaving fin  
Of the fish draw near and nearer, ugly and fell as sin—  
“God,” said the shivering sailor, “such a fix to be in!”

He tore his coat to ribbons and lashed himself to his raft,  
Slept, and dreamt of devils, woke from his sleep and laughed,  
There was the sign of the monster slowly following aft.

The moon was up in the heavens ghastly, gibbous and wan,  
But not as pale as the lonely, sorrowful, sinful man,  
Who, tied to a whiskey barrel, waited till day would dawn.

Day and the young day's blushes spread away to the rear,  
The man stood up on his timbers and feared with a deadly  
fear,  
There was the fin of the monster ever approaching near.

Opal and ruby and diamond, glimmered the eastern sky,  
And the waters that circled the barrel laughed to the sun on  
high,  
“Christ,” and the sailor shuddered, “a beautiful day to die.”

He thought of the mother who bore him, he thought of the  
homely croft,  
Where the heath of the hill was purple, the grass of the field  
was soft  
Then he looked to the sky above him, and thought of the God  
aloft.

He ventured to kneel to heaven and pray for a drop of rain,  
His knees were creaking and aching, he moaned as a child in  
pain,  
But found he forgot what the words were, and rose to his feet  
again.

Down in the deep below him he saw the sword fish swim,  
The weird uncanny spectres rise from their caverns dim,  
But one still stayed on the surface waiting he knew for him.

Morning and night and morning, light and darkness and light,  
Hungry when stars were beaming, thirsty when noon was  
bright,  
Hungry and tired and thirsty and—Heavens, a sail in sight!

They picked him up from the ocean, the grinning, gibbering  
Gael,  
Nude as a nymph on his barrel, using his shirt for a sail—  
Thus they told it to me on the Buzzy Bee,  
But I never believed the tale.

## Longings.

There is clatter on the pavement, there is hurry in the street,  
 The curtains of the night are dropping down,  
 The heart-throbs of the city clang with dull insistent beat,  
 The gas lights glimmer faintly thro' the town—  
 The ten-hour shift is laboured, and the gaffer's voice is still,  
 And my thoughts go o'er the ocean surge afar,  
 To the meadow and the river and the breen and the hill,  
 And the little limewashed cottage in Kilcar.

I have seen the crimson dawning of a Spanish morning glow,  
 I have cowered before the menace of the wild,  
 I have seen the sapphire sunlight tint the everlasting snow  
 Where December's virgin granaries are piled,  
 I have heard the mountain torrents hurtle riotous in wrath,  
 I have tramped the roads to London and to Rome,  
 But I'd rather have my childhood and the narrow moorland  
 path.  
 The path that leads to happiness and home.

I am sitting by the hot plate and my comrades talk about  
 The things they've done and which they shouldn't do,  
 I have been their pal in sinning, and I've got to grin it out,  
 And the harvest of my oats is overdue—  
 'Tis not so much the slaving in the sewerage of life,  
 'Tis not so much the toiling and the wet,  
 'Tis not so much the curbing of my hatred of the strife,  
 But the shattered dreams I never can forget.

The shrines the world has broken were the shrines at which  
 I knelt,  
 And the faith I cherished so it laughed to shame,  
 But God alone in Heaven knows the sufferings I felt.  
 When I sold my youth's ideals for a name,  
 And pawned my simple virtues for a meed of evil praise,  
 Ah, I pledged them where I never could redeem.  
 Tho' to many it was merely just a love of newer ways,  
 To me it was the waking from a dream.

They are rough and rugged fellows, my companions sworn and  
 true.

And maybe I am rough and rude as they—  
 But oh, heavens! how they'd mock me, if by chance they ever  
 knew

That I hankered for a cabin miles away—  
 Where it stands above the shingle that the waters whirl upon,  
 As they race across the sandhill and the bar—  
 That I long for it by night, dreaming by the hot-plate bright,  
 My father's homely cottage in Kilcar.

## The Pines.

Above the pine the ghostly moonlight lingers,  
 Or plays along the fir,  
 The elves are tracing with their slender fingers  
 Their paths of gossamer,  
 The trees are crooning, softly, saintly, lowly,  
 Like whispering acolytes,  
 The heart-song of the forest deep and holy  
 As northern nights.

From hoary oak and alder hang the mosses,  
 Time's ancient tapestry;  
 The molten moon-fire crosses and recrosses  
 In silvery filigree,  
 The stars peep from the hyaline, enchanted  
 Deep waters of the stream,  
 And every break and brake and bank is haunted  
 By visions as a dream.

Low in the darkling fretwork, arborescent,  
 The trailing swamp mists rise  
 Impalpable as frostwork's evanescent  
 Shimmering subtleties.  
 Afar the antlered moose is calling plaintly  
 Thro' covert drear and dim,  
 And from the thicket edge enticing faintly,  
 The female answers him.

Across the north the fair aurora glistening  
 Leans on the heavenly signs,  
 Night!—and yearning as a child I'm listening  
 The heart song of the pines.

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## MAXIMS OF MOLESKIN JOE.

Dead languages should be buried.  
 A poor man is better than a poor liar  
 Some strange chickens roost on family trees.

## The Slave.

What mean ye that ye beat my people into pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? Isai. iii., 15.

---

The olden chronicles tell us Akbar the slave was strong.  
On the woes of his brothers in bondage he brooded and sorrowed long,  
Akbar, the slave of Reienos, scarred with the iron and thong.

He toiled in the field and forest and furrow early and late,  
Dragging through ruts and ridges, with slouching and servile gait,  
But Akbar the slave was human, and Akbar the slave could hate.

Under the goad of the master, sweating as horses sweat,  
Scorned by the page and lady appareled in satinet,  
The sinewy slave could suffer, suffer and not forget.

\* \* \* \* \*

When the heat of the day was over and the tremulous stars  
looked wan,  
When night hung low on the turret, drawbridge and barbican,  
Into the darkling forest stealthily stole a man.

Silent as steals a panther, quick as a wolf on prowl,  
A shadow among the shadows, almost unseen by the owl,  
As the watch dog saw the figure in awe it filled the night with  
its howl.

In a hut in the depth of the thicket, rugged, misshapen, rude,  
Akbar the slave of Reienos in the spiritless solitude,  
With the cleverness hate had given fashioned a slab of wood.

The prong of a graip for a gimlet, a sharpened spade for a  
plane,  
He shaped it level and specular, smooth as the shield of a  
thane;  
Toiling alone in the darkness, filled with a passion insane.

With withes of the seasoned willows he tied it as firm as steel  
Down to the bench in the dwelling, filled with a giant's zeal,  
Then made he with maniac labour a grim and horrible wheel.

With the rim of flexible pinewood, the lissome fir for the spoke,  
 A groove and a rope around it, a turning handle of oak,  
 Thus Akbar spoke in the darkness, timing his hammer's stroke—

"The brutes of the byres are tended, there is food for the hunting pack,  
 He has trampled the crumbs from his table, the crumbs that my brothers lack,  
 Reienos has tortured and lashed us—now I will pay him back.

"Lord, I have waited to see Thee strike him down in his crime,  
 I who am nearly outworn, whipped like a cur in my prime,  
 Vengeance is Thine it is spoken, but I cannot abide Thy time."

\* \* \* \* \*

The arrogant Lord Reienos strode through the woods alone,  
 Far through the gloomy forest thinking of things unknown,  
 Reienos the strong and fearless, hard of heart as a stone.

As a panther hangs on its quarry, as a vulture circles afar,  
 A sinister figure followed, silent as moves a star,  
 Akbar, the grim avenger, marked with the sear and the scar.

The rubescent sun sank westward, tinging with vermeil dyes,  
 The shimmering leaves of the forest, the gentian dome of the skies,  
 And showing the tigerish hate in the villein's passionate eyes.

A crash in the brake behind him, like when a boar breaks through—  
 Reienos turned in anger, turned, and saw, and knew—  
 And the slayer laughed in the silence for the deed he lusted to do.

Laughed and laid hold of his master, gripped him with arms strong—  
 Seized like a leaf in the cyclone, borne as a straw is along,  
 Reienos thought on his Maker, Akbar remembered the thong.

In the zest of the whirlwind foray Reienos had led the way,  
 When the noise of the shields and spears rang to the vault of day,  
 But death at the hands of a villain Reienos began to pray.



Into the gloomy cabin drear as the pit of dread,  
Down on the slab he placed him, his hands above his head,  
Tied to the wheel, his body fastened with withe and thread.

“Pray to heaven for mercy as your hours are almost done,  
The lowly slave at your castle may look on the morrow’s sun,  
But two will pass ere it rises, and thou, Reienos, art one—

“One, and I am the other--strung from your castle wall—  
Pray—I have prayed for years outside your lordly hall,  
But God in Heaven was busy watching the sparrows fall.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Flaxen pale the moonshine glimmered on dune and tree,  
A groan came borne on the breezes, lone and piteously.  
A wheel is turned in the cabin, a maniac laughs in glee,

A meteor streaks the impearled dome with its fiery light,  
Cluster on cluster they sparkle stars that are diamond bright.  
Another turn in the torture, another moan in the night.

Falling as falls the spice flower down the mane of the breeze,  
Slowly the molten moonfire fell on the bearded trees,  
Where the eerie midnight vampires bowed at their fetishes.

Borne in dismal cadence, the groans of the sufferer  
Sank away in the silence, died on the midnight air,  
And only the grim avenger watched by the body there.

They found the slave in the dawning, beside the lord of the  
hall,

They hung him in scorn and fury, high from the castle wall,  
The man who wept for his people, the man who tired of his  
thrall.

\* \* \* \* \*

Only an ancient story, fraught with its weight of woe,  
Of the love of a slave for freedom, and the hate that crushed  
him low—

Only an outworn story, now—as in long ago.

### Fate.

The cloudwrack o'er the heaven flies,  
 The wild wind whistles on the lake,  
 The drooping branches in the brake  
 Mourn for the pale blue butterflies.

Where is the sheen of green and gold?  
 The sullen Winter's beard is hoar,  
 Where are the fruits the Autumn bore?  
 We know not, who are growing old.

We pulled the dainty flowers of spring,  
 But we were happy being young—  
 And now when Autumn's knell is rung  
 We wither 'neath the vampire wing.

---

### Roaming.

I steady my staff at the crossroads, it falls with the breeze  
 from the south,  
 I lie to the northern meadows with the kiss of the morn on  
 my mouth,  
 The dawn is of opal and ruby, the dew glitters soft on my  
 breast,  
 And the road lies away o'er the world, and the life of the road  
 is the best.

The gossamer lies on the greensward like threads made of  
 silvery fire,  
 And the breeze in the hedgerows is singing like strains of a  
 magical lyre;  
 There is lure in the woods of the east-land, and health in  
 the fields of the west,  
 And the road lieth over the world, and the life of the road is  
 the best.

I steady my staff at the crossroads, it speaks of a southern  
 land  
 In the winning and wonderful language the staff and myself  
 understand,  
 For wherever it falls I will follow, nor question its loving  
 behest,  
 For the road runs the wide world over, and the life of the  
 road is the best.

---

Moleskin's Maxims—All that glitters is not mud.

## The Song of Maloney.

They are gambling in the cabin, Moleskin Joe, Magee and Dan,

There's splash of stagnant crimson on the lance-edged hills  
afar—

I've a whiff of good tobacco, and a bucket in the can,

And a sort of fawning liking for the trembling evening star.  
And my thoughts go roaming, roaming, like an exile's in the  
gloaming,

Through the grey fogs of the valley and the cloud wreaths of  
the hill,

And I think I see her yet, where in olden days we met,  
Awaiting at the corner for her bloke returning still.

Moleskin's plunging bob and tanner, he would call me such a  
fool

If he knew what I was thinking in the heel-end of the day.  
But somehow I cannot help it, and I cannot bear the school,

For my thoughts are ever running to a maiden miles away.  
To a maiden hellish pretty, in the dirty, smoky city,

Poor as me she is, and poorer, but a year or two ago.  
Ere I came to swine in muck where all nature's down on luck,  
luck,

She was more to me I reckon than anyone I know.

O'er the dam, across the breastworks, drops the night and fills  
the land,

There are lights inside the cabin, there are many at the  
game,

But away down in the city does she ever understand

The reason that I'm lagging, and the why I never came?—  
Maybe she's forgot about me, plodding on her own without me.

I the roughest card among us, I the plunger at the school,  
And the pallid evening star whispers, "Idiot of the Bar.

Do you really think she wants you, you a whiskey-sodden  
fool?"

Down behind the mountain ridges, grave-like valleys gulp the  
night,

Far below the grave-like valleys lies the town of which I  
dream,

With its many lamps aglitter, and the music halls alight,

And the galleries are crowded, and the footlights are agleam,  
And perhaps the actress singing, some fond memories is  
bringing

Of the kisses in the alley, and the softly whispered vow—  
Here I'm dreaming miles away, she is sitting at the play.

Maybe thinking kindly of me as I'm thinking of her now.

And the photo that she gave me, on the lonely night we parted  
 I have lost it, 'twas the night we tried to clear the Red Inn  
 bar—

“Come, Maloney, fill the school up—” Well, whenever you  
 have started

On the downward road, its smoother than the other road by  
 far—

All right, Carroty, I'm willing, I have got an extra shilling—

Mary Somers, oh, she's hooked up by some collared city  
 chap,

But perhaps I'll meet her yet, for somehow I can't forget—

Shut up, Moleskin, here I'm coming, is it banker, brag, or  
 nap?



## Bad News.

He hugged a delusion in petticoats.—Moleskin.

---

“Your flame is marri’d I understand,”

He heard the man from the city say,  
He dealt the flats with a shaky hand\*

And clean forgot the manner of play;  
I saw his eyelids quiver a bit,

And Big Maloney was never a saint.  
He played the game, made a mess of it.

Yet his partner saw it without complaint.

He shoved the fingers to beat the four,

And led the queen for another’s ace,  
Then jacked his hand and staked no more,

So Carrotty Dan took up his place.

He sat apart on the wooden seat

Pulling a clay that was not alight.  
Shaking his head, and shuffling his feet—

Maloney was out of sorts that night.

I noticed the lines on his haggard face.

I heard him sigh. We played the game,

“Moleskin, lead.” He led the ace;

Carrotty Dan had the Jack for the same.

Some muttered: “There’s more fish in the sea,”

And others remarked: “A maid’s a maid,”

“There isn’t another girl for me,”

Was all that Big Maloney said.

Poor Maloney! And still we played—

“Where, M’Kay, is the trump you gave?”

“Well, it is queer,” another said,

“I thought he’d play on his mother’s grave.”

But Jim Maloney was looking sad,

Another fellow had hooked his flame,

And some remarked, “Is it not too bad?”

As we shuffled the cards and played the game.

---

\* He becometh poor who dealeth with a slack hand.  
—Prov. x., 4.



## The Passing of Maloney.

In the chill of anæmic December when the snow on the ditch-  
way lay,  
He bursted the jaw of the gaffer, in an argumentative way\*  
Got handed his couple of shillings and went in the evening  
gray—

Into the dip of the hollow a moving speck on the snow,  
Bound for the township and model, eighty miles off or so,  
And his comrades leaned on their shovels, and sorrowed to  
see him go.

That night they kept from the card school, and smoked in  
silence apart,  
Swore at the cloud-drift, and listened the night winds fitfully  
start,  
And felt a chill in the marrow or an icy grip on the heart.

Quickly he padded the mountain, and dragged thro' the  
desolate vale,  
And over the gap toothed ridges, where the flaccid sunsets fail,  
And the endless cumulus musters glaucous or flaxen pale.

Broad-chested, lank Maloney, muscular, strong and wild.  
A Berserkir fierce in his anger, simple in faith as a child.  
The primitive human in moleskin, uncultured and undefiled.

Crunching and crushing the snow-way, cursing his luck when  
he fell,  
He plodded unwearied, unfearing, by quagmire and tarn and  
well,  
And a star o'erhead where the cloudrift spread gleamed like  
an asphodel,

Gleamed for a tremulous moment, fading as soon as it shone,  
Leaving him lost in the vastness of night and its by-ways  
unknown,  
With a charnel gloominess girded, affrighted, astray and  
alone.

---

\* The opinion of the man who argues with his fist is always  
respected.—From the Diary of Moleskin Joe.

Otiose, obdurate, ominous, drifted the snow in the air,  
Gibingly, grim, geomantic, tracing the lines of despair,  
Weaving a shroud for his body, shaping a wreath for his hair.

"Where am I straying to anyhow? Cold, I am cold to the  
skin. . . .  
Lord, he's a hell of a gaffer . . . . how did the quarrel  
begin?  
Called me an imp of the devil, and managed to get me my  
tin.

"I'm sure I am lost in the darkness—ain't it a horrible fix,  
Knowing your final is coming. . . . Curse him, the imp of  
old Nick's.  
Every foot that I'm lifting drags like a bundle of bricks.

"I'm padding it round in a circle—round in a circle—and  
round. . . .  
To-morrow they'll search and they'll find me, dead like a brute  
on the ground.  
Dead. . . . 'Tis the corpse of Maloney. Moleskin will say  
when I'm found.

"Mary, the girl that I courted—how under hell can it be—  
There she's smiling . . . she's going . . . Lord, I'm  
not able to see! . . .  
Look at the swarm of demons grinning like blazes at me.

"Shoving it on to a fellow, cause you are boss of the show. . .  
Here I am raving and raving, wandering round in the snow,  
Going to hell in a blizzard—well it is time I should go!

"Drinks to the bar and I'll stand it, everyone here in the  
place. . . .  
Turn a man off in the snow-drift—go, or I'll batter your  
face. . . .  
Matey, my turn at the hammer—I'm for a bob on the ace."

He jacked up his soul in the darkness, and slept in an angel  
white shroud,  
And the ghouls of the moorland kept litchwake under the  
canopied cloud,  
When nature was yelling in anguish and the turbulent tempest  
was loud.

---

I knew asses that had a decided preference for eating roses.  
--Moleskin.

## The Last Rhyme, Save One.

I have gathered a poise of other men's flowers, and nothing  
but the thread that binds them is mine own.—Montaigne.

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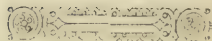
I've sung in a wayward fashion  
The song of a rugged heart,  
With less of power than of passion,  
With more of desire than art,  
Tales of roving and roaming,  
Stories of daring done,  
While ye wait for the poet coming—  
The singer of later on.

From drear and deserted places,  
Where the wastes of creation lie,  
Where the pitiless hail-cloud races  
Over the merciless sky,  
On the offside of desolation  
When the fog is fetid and dense,  
In the watchman's reeking station  
Guarding the sliprail fence,  
Tales of the great unholy,  
Lazily, lovingly, long,  
I've gathered in byways lowly  
And fashioned them into song.

The rime of the roving fellow  
Who dreams by the midnight fire,  
When the autumn leaves are yellow  
And sere as his youth's desire,  
The dirge of the loosened boulder  
And the thing that gasps beneath,  
While the hod is yet on the shoulder,  
The pipe is yet in the teeth,  
Of the dynamite in the boring,  
That didn't go off when it should,  
And the pick that went exploring,  
And the pal who left for good—  
For ever the signal reddens,  
For ever is danger near,  
And the sound of the up-train deadens  
The down-train's roar in the ear.

Thus have I sung their story,  
 That wondrous story of theirs,  
 The navvies' sorrow and glory,  
 And death that is unawares,  
 But under the rougher singing,  
 In a quivering undertone,  
 Perchance you will hear it ringing,  
 A song that is all mine own,  
 Out of its rough environs,  
 The roar of the running cars,  
 The lilt of the canting irons,  
 The rune of the lifting bars,  
 Apart from the navy quarrels,  
 Card-school riot and song,  
 Manners, merits and morals,  
 And chivalry—going wrong—  
 Perchance that you will discover  
 Under the rugged art  
 The voice of the nature lover,  
 The song of the singer's heart.

A poet will follow after.  
 A poet of later years,  
 To sing of their joy and laughter,  
 And weep for their woe and tears,  
 Striking the tuneful lyre  
 Greater than me by far,  
 As the rose outrivals the briar,  
 As the sun outrivals the star,  
 And the songs I sing in the gloaming  
 May turn to nought in the dawn  
 That beams for the singer coming,  
 The poet of later on.



### L'Envoi—To my Pick and Shovel.

*When the last, long shift will be laboured, and the lying time  
will be burst,*

*And we go as picks or shovels, navvies or nabobs, must,*

*When you go up on the scrap-heap and I go down to the dust.*

*Will ever a one remember the times our voices rung,*

*When you were limber and lissome, and I was lusty and young?*

*Remember the jobs we've laboured, the heartfelt songs we've sung?*

*Perhaps some mortal in speaking will give us a kindly thought—*

*“There is a muckpile they shifted, here is a place where they  
wrought,”*

*But maybe our straining and striving and singing will go for  
nought.*

*When you go up in the scrap-heap, and I go down to the dust—*

*(Little children of labour, food for the worms and the rust,)*

*When the last long shift will be laboured and the lying time  
will be burst.*





# Gleanings from a Navvy's Scrap-Book.

By Patrick MacGill.

PRICE—SIXPENCE Nett.

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## SOME PRESS OPINIONS.

"THE CLARION."—Harry Beswick, in "THE CLARION," says :

*I have received a small Book of Verses written by one P. MacGill, a young Irishman, who is working as a navvy on the Caledonian Railway, at Greenock. Is he a genius? Well, dear reader, that is for you to say. Genius, like beauty, frequently lies in the eye of the beholder. All that I can say is: he writes wonderfully well, he has a rich imagination, felicity and facility of expression, he can paint mind pictures in rare colours, and he possesses the wondrous gift of words exquisitely sought. And this young Ulster lad has humour. Most of MacGill's poems are of a distinctly high order, and none is unworthy. He has better work up his sleeve, and I shall look for his next volume of poems with great interest. . . . How the deuce did this versifier find himself in a navvies hut instead of a literary salon? How came a poet who can put La Fontaine into capital verse to be wielding a pick?*

"THE GLASGOW NEWS "

*Mr. MacGill's verses give evidence of a considerable poetical gift.*

"BELFAST NEWS-LETTER "

*These verses are not without humour.*

"THE FORWARD." J. MacLean, M.A., in "THE FORWARD," says :

*The remarkable feature about the Author of Gleanings from a Navvy's Scrap Book is not so much that he is a poorly paid wage-slave—a railway surfaceman—as that he is but a boy of barely twenty years of age. . . . The varieties of verses, stanzas, rhythms, rhymes resorted to as a melodious vehicle of his many themes, shows capacity of no mean order. One thing that particularly struck me was the sweet and easy flow of the pure English, unblemished by euphuistic corruscations and cumbrous classical allusions.*

## Press Opinions.

### "THE EASTBOURNE CHRONICLE."

The author of these verses is a genuine navvy, and not much more than a boy. He writes with force and feeling, and a spontaneity all his own. He calls things by their name, and calls them straightly and roughly what they are, as a man should who is at handgrips who has been a manual labourer since he left school at the age of twelve, yet has had time to cultivate no small degree of literary taste, and even to write and publish a small volume of his own poetry, which he sells in his spare time. This man, MacGill by name, is a native of Ulster, and is little over twenty years of age.

### "THE DERRY JOURNAL."

These verses are of much, and in some respects, indeed, singular merit. Mr. MacGill has the true gift and it is applied with a rare freshness and versatility. . . . There is real ability and no small art in this little work.

### "THE ROAD."

"Gleanings from a Navvy's Scrap Book," by P. MacGill, is the daintiest little volume of verse we have handled for a long time.

### "THE PAISLEY AND RENFREWSHIRE GAZETTE"

They (the verses) are as a rule clearer, indicating true genius. . . . A most entertaining little book.

### "GREENOCK HERALD."

We are struck by the versatility of the poet, and the wide range of his muse.

### "THE EVENING TIMES."

Mr MacGill is not content to produce sweetly, pretty trifles: Frankly, he is an iconoclast, and says things with the candid irresponsibility of youth. . . . From cover to cover the contents are invigorating, and the author, knowing life in the rough, has a fine facility for metre and rhyme. . . . As the result of a perusal of this work, even a hardened reviewer feels that it is time Mr. MacGill laid aside pick and shovel and permanently took up the pen.

### "THE DERRY PEOPLE"

Mr. MacGill breathes forth poetry in simple, natural and entrancing style, that everyone who peruses his work will regard as meritorious.

## Press Opinions.

### "THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE."

*At present working as a navvy on a repair gang on the Caledonian Railway, at Greenock, there is a young Irishman with the unvarnished realities of life . . . and his songs are racy of the toil at which he works and the naked starkness of nature. He has a measure of wit, humour, keen intelligence, and throughout the rivile verses we catch the ringing note of iron on iron.*

### "EVERYBODY'S WEEKLY."—The Editor says:

*"Gleanings" is one of those books where you can feel the soul of the man who wrote it. . . . The verses are blended with a wild, bright, gay note of curious individual quality. . . . I sincerely wish him the opportunity in life he so well deserves.*

### "DUNDEE ADVERTISER."

*In spite of the much-vaunted boast of the nobility of honest toil, Mr. MacGill is fitted for higher things than work as a railway navvy.*

### "THE AYR ADVERTISER."

*The verses have the true ring.*

### "THE GLASGOW WEEKLY NEWS."

*It is difficult to realize most of these poems were written in a navvies' hut by a lad of twenty.*

### A CORRESPONDENT writes:

*Rotten. Your poetical ear deserves thickening.*

### Andrew Lang in "ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS."

*His verses indicate the author has a very considerable gift . . . Verses which warm the heart of every book lover . . . His translations from La Fontaine are very clever.*

### Ralph O'Farrell in "LONDON DAILY EXPRESS."

*It is a volume that well deserves the epithet remarkable. . . . In it MacGill shows he has unusual talents, he has command of language: he thinks and is not afraid to be original.*

### Spencer Leigh Hughes in "THE MORNING LEADER."

*There is the true ring and swing, rhyme and rhythm in many of his verses. Indeed so far as rhyme is concerned the young navvy can give many a more famous poet a long start and beat him . . . His cynicism is only skin deep!*

## Press Opinions.

E. Marston, F.R.G.S., in "PUBLISHERS' CIRCULAR."

*Some of his most promising verses refer to nature, and here and there he gives wonderfully perfect descriptions of out-door scenes . . . . It is in poems of this description we like our young poet best.*

DR. CRONE in the "IRISH BOOK LOVER."

*This is a remarkable little book . . . . The author has written verse smooth and flowing indicating the influence of Tennyson, Harte and Sims.*

JUSTICE.

*The verses have undoubted merit.*

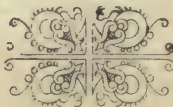
"THE BROTHERHOOD JOURNAL."

*Wonderful. His verses ring true.*

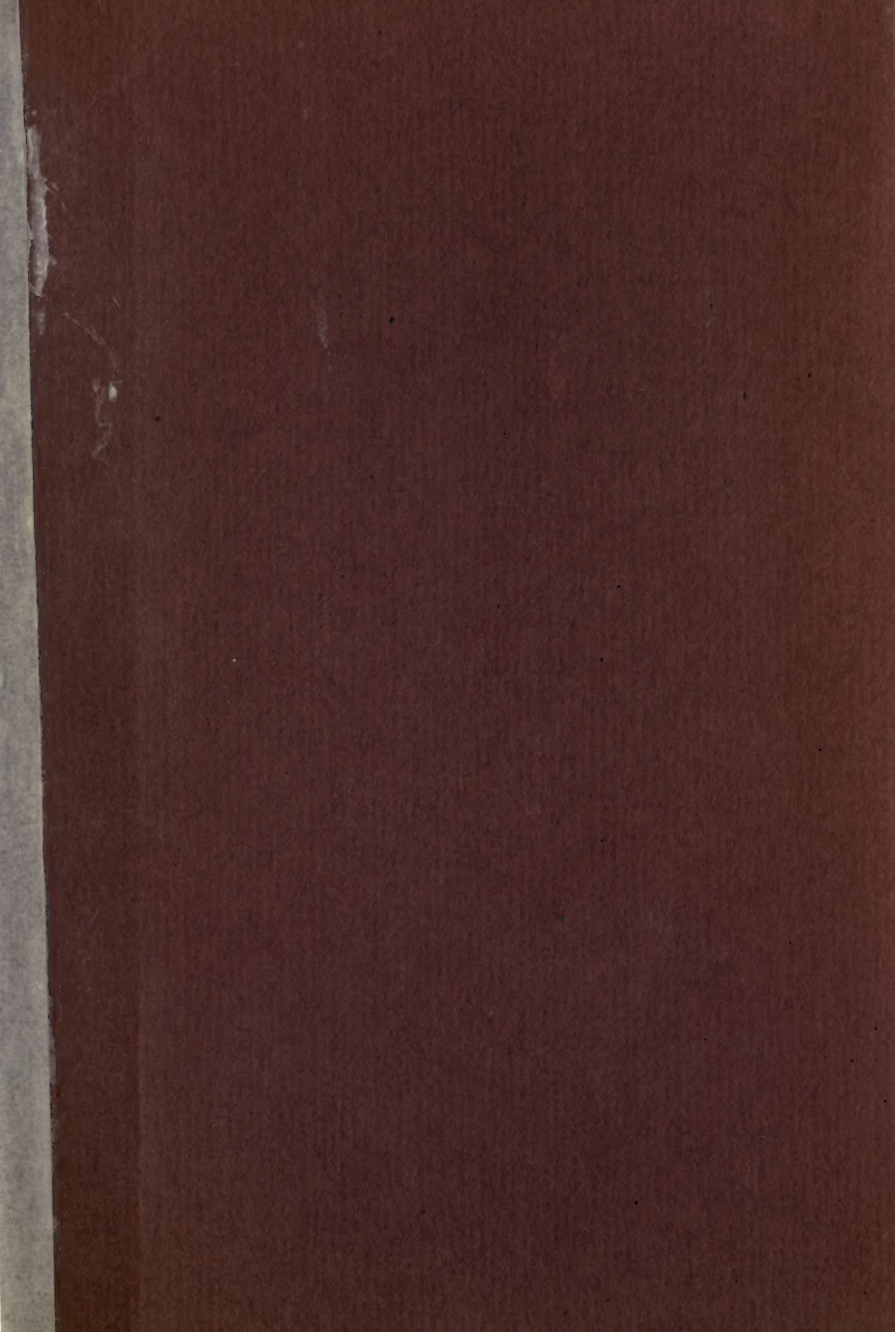
J. H. Ingram in "THE BOOKMAN," says:

*He (Mr. MacGill) has contrived despite his position to educate himself up to a high mental standard, and make a fair bid for fame. . . . His writings are full of promise, they display pathos, a strong sense of humour, sympathy with the lowly, a love of nature and above all a healthy ambition.*

(Now out of Print.)









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